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Announcement of Prize-winners in the BEST STORY COMPETITION FOR JANUARY



HE second in the series of this competition has been concluded and the prizes have been awarded as announced below.

The second competition has turned out to be even more successful than the first, in the number of replies, in the discrimination shown by the authors and in the helpfulness of their ideas.

The publishers feel that a great deal of light has been shed upon the problem of editing AINSLEE'S by this means, some which they hoped for and some of which was entirely unexpected. As a result of all this they have already taken steps to put to practical effect some of the suggestions that have been made.

The Prizes have been awarded as follows:

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AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

VOL. XXI

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Meatless Dishes with the Meat Flavor for Lenten Season Days

By MARY JANE MCCLURE

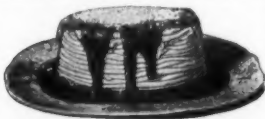


PRIL, all mud and slush underfoot and frowning, weeping skies overhead, presents a somber setting for the season of sackcloth and ashes. Fasting and penance would not be bugbears if the forty days of Lent fell in Midsummer, when skies are bright and gush of bird-song and fragrance of flowers distract the mind from such a material thing as longing for a good square meal--and meat. But, falling as it does in the spongy month, the time of retirement from frills and frivolity and roast beef is doubly hard to bear.

It requires a stronger character than is possessed by the average mortal to deliberately put aside meat for forty days, without compromising in some way. Nature and training force the stomach to cry out in an insistent demand for "the fleshpots of Egypt." Some sort of a crutch is required upon which to lean in moments of weakness. Put something into the stomach that tastes like the food it is craving, and it quits crying and goes to sleep like a satisfied baby. By taking advantage of this propensity it will be possible to slip through the Lenten season without much discomfort or effort at self-denial.

No better compromise could be imagined at this juncture than Armour's Extract of Beef. With its help, substantial meatless dishes may be prepared with the rich flavor of roast beef, as well as tasty tit-bits that may be eaten without the slightest qualm of conscience.

The possibilities contained in the tiny jar of Armour's Extract of Beef are limited only by the ingenuity, originality and daring of the cook, and the ingredients at hand. All the delicious juices of rich, red, lean beef are concentrated in an aromatic, savory essence, delicately seasoned and full of palate-captivating properties.

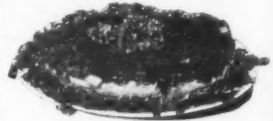


Macaroni Loaf

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much as would be required if Armour's was employed. For this reason, while other brands at first sight may appear to be less expensive, Armour's, in the long run, is the cheapest, because only about a quarter as much of it will be needed to produce the same results, and thus it will last four times as long as the "bargain" brand.

Meatless Beef Loaf. Soak $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of stale bread in warm water and squeeze it dry. Put a piece of butter the size of an egg in a stew-pan and when hot, mix in it a large onion, finely chopped. As soon as the onion becomes a golden color, put in the bread and a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, and salt to taste. Stir it until it leaves the sides of the pan, then add two eggs in which has been mixed $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of Armour's Extract of Beef dissolved in 1 tablespoonful of boiling water. Put in a baking dish and bake for ten minutes. Serve with brown sauce made as follows:



Meatless Beef Loaf

Brown Sauce. Melt 1 heaping teaspoonful of butter. Into this stir 1 tablespoonful of flour. Add boiling water to make the gravy the proper consistency. Season with pepper and salt and stir in 1 teaspoonful of Armour's Extract of Beef.

Macaroni Loaf. Cook the macaroni in salted water until it is tender; then drain free from the water and blanch in cold water, and place in a basin in alternate layers of grated cheese, bits of butter, salt and pepper until the basin is filled; then cover with milk and bake in a moderate oven for half an hour. Slip a knife around the edge and unroll onto a dish, covering with a sauce made as follows:



Trout with Shrimp Sauce

Devil Sauce. Press through a sieve the hard-boiled yolks of two eggs. Have the whites chopped fine and add to them a teaspoonful of minced parsley, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoonful of paprika, 1 chopped Spanish sweet pepper, and a teaspoonful of grated onion. Add all these ingredients to a sauce made from 1 pint of hot water to which has been added 2 teaspoonfuls of Armour's Extract of Beef, 1 tablespoonful of flour mixed in a paste with 1 rounding tablespoonful of butter, then stirring it into the hot water and cooking until creamy. Sprinkle the egg yolk over the top, and serve hot for luncheon or as an entree for dinner.

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AINSLIEE'S

VOL. XXI.

APRIL, 1908.

No. 3.

The Forefinger

By Henry Gallup Paine



CHAPTER I.



FENWAY was undoubtedly excited. There was a glint in his eye, there was an eagerness in his manner, that were so foreign to his usual imperturbability under the most surprising circumstances, that I regarded the circumstance as most surprising.

I note this fact, in starting to describe the experience that he proceeded to relate to me and the strange happenings that followed from it, not because such a condition was characteristic of the man, but because it was not. I note it at the risk of conveying a false impression of my friend, who had become so familiar with the unusual in his long and successful career as an investigator of crimes and mysteries that the unexpected was what he seemed most ready to expect. I do so for two reasons: the first, because it was for me the startling introduction to one of the most remarkable cases in which I was ever privileged materially to assist him; the second, because it reveals a side of his nature—the impulsive, sympathetic,

intensely human side—that was so seldom apparent beneath the mask of baffling inscrutability that he had schooled himself to wear.

I was seated in the study of our apartment, going over and classifying the jumble of notes relating to a peculiar kidnaping case on which he had recently been engaged, when the door suddenly opened and Fenway entered, his cheeks wearing an unaccustomed flush. Throwing himself into a chair opposite to me, he exclaimed:

"Well, I'm in for it now."

"For what?" I asked, shaken out of my preoccupied mood by the seismic shock of his abrupt announcement.

"That's the worst of it—I don't know," he replied, with a gesture of impatience.

"For heaven's sake, explain," I cried. "This begins in a delightfully interesting manner. Let me prescribe a drip absinthe—it is said to have a soothing effect upon the nerves—and then tell me what has happened to ruffle your habitual serenity."

"A good suggestion," said Fenway. "Desperate diseases demand desperate remedies; and I must have a bad attack of pucker, if it is apparent to such an old mole as you." And for the next ten

minutes he gave his undivided attention to the preparation of the opalescent and tranquilizing beverage.

"There," he said, as he watched the last drop of water trickle through the cracked ice into the tumbler beneath, "you see, your prescription has already produced its effect. I suggest that you now demonstrate your faith in its efficacy by taking the dose yourself. You will need it to brace yourself for the further shock of hearing what I have really let myself in for. No? Well, I shall at least reserve it for a possible emergency." So saying, he settled himself back in his chair and lighted a cigar. After a few satisfied puffs, he remarked quietly:

"Count Nicolas Nazarov, the Russian consul-general, was shot in the street, in broad daylight, this morning."

"Where?" I asked.

"Just as he was coming out of his apartment in the Marquand, in West Thirty-third Street."

"Was he killed?"

"No; but it is a close call if he recovered. He was taken to the New York Hospital in an ambulance."

"Did they get the man?"

"I don't know. They got a man."

"Who was he?"

"Who was who? The man who did the shooting or the man who was arrested?" Fenway asked, in turn.

"Oh, I don't know; either—both."

"I don't know, either," Fenway replied, with a short laugh. "That's what I have undertaken to find out."

"Then you undoubtedly will," I said. "But how did you come to be engaged? It's a straight job for the police, isn't it?"

"In a way, yes," Fenway answered; "but the police think they have the man."

"And who doesn't think so?"

"The man; at least, he says he doesn't."

"Is he your client?"

"The same."

"Well, who is he, then?"

"I haven't the remotest idea."

"Didn't he tell you?"

"Not a word."

"And you have engaged your services to a person you know nothing about, who refuses to take you into his confidence? It is not a bit like you."

"No, it isn't; and that's what makes it so interesting and exciting. It would be useless to deny that I have shown some interest and excitement. I don't expect to lose my interest; but I think I can sufficiently subdue my feeling of excitement to give the affair a calm and logical consideration."

"Yes," I suggested, "and when you do, I think you will drop it like a hot potato."

"No," replied Fenway; "your metaphor is ill-chosen. When I take hold of a hot potato, I don't drop it; I eat it. It is the cold potato that presents no attraction to my palate."

"Suppose, then," I went on, "that you drop your figures of rhetoric, at least, and get down to cold facts. Tell me what has happened and about the man who has so mysteriously hypnotized you."

"I wonder if he has hypnotized me," Fenway said, musingly. "It would be a new sensation, and to that extent an entertaining one. But wait until you have heard the whole story, and then tell me if you think I could have acted differently."

"As if what I thought would make any difference to you," I interjected.

Fenway waved my comment aside. "Why," he continued, "it will be like playing a game of chess blindfolded. The difficulty increases the joy of the contest and intensifies the final triumph."

"Or defeat," I added, pushing the still untasted absinthe toward him.

Fenway refused it with a laugh.

"What a wet blanket you are to-day!" he exclaimed.

"What a firebrand you are to-day!" I replied. "But go ahead with your comedy, and I promise to reserve my comments until the end of the piece. Begin at the beginning and give me the whole plot."

"I can't begin at the beginning because I don't know it; so I shall, have to begin where I make my entrance

upon the scene. I had gone into the Waldorf-Astoria to buy some postage-stamps, and had passed out through the Thirty-third Street door and was walking toward Broadway, when my attention was attracted by a rapidly growing crowd in front of the Davenport apartment-house, half-way down the block. As I drew nearer, Officer Bergner, the tall, blond German of the traffic squad, whose post is at the crossing of Thirty-third Street and Broadway, came running in the opposite direction. I made my way around the crowd in time to give him a hasty greeting and to follow him as he elbowed his way through the throng to the focus of excitement—a well-dressed, middle-aged man who lay against the fire-hydrant on the sidewalk. He was bleeding from a bullet-wound in the abdomen.

"Doctor Carlton Fletcher, whose office is on the ground floor of the Marquand, was ministering to him. Doctor Fletcher said that his patient was Count Nicolas Nazarov, the Russian consul-general, who had been shot as he came out of the Marquand, which is opposite, but a little to the east of, the Davenport. He had heard the shot, had risen from his desk, looked out of the window, had seen the count, who lives just above him, stagger a few steps to the hydrant and fall, and had then hurried to his assistance.

"The consul-general, on being asked by the physician if he knew who had shot him, had pointed to the window of an unoccupied apartment on the second floor of the Davenport. A policeman, who had opportunely heard the shot and was promptly on the spot, had thereupon rushed into the house, followed by several citizens.

"I asked the count," Doctor Fletcher added, "if I should have him carried up to his rooms; but when he learned the possible seriousness of his injury, he said that he preferred to be taken to a hospital; so I sent my man, who had come out to help me, to telephone to the New York Hospital for an ambulance."

"Did he see the man who shot him? What sort of a looking chap was he?"

asked Officer Bergner, who had taken off his gloves and pulled out his notebook.

"He didn't see the man's face," answered the physician; "only the hand holding the revolver thrust out of the open window."

"At that moment, with a confused murmur of excited voices, a bevy of men came pouring out of the main entrance of the Davenport. In the lead was a police officer who grasped by the arm an unprepossessing-looking man of indeterminate age. His clothes were those of a gentleman, but his face was horribly swollen, and was discolored by curious purple blotches that a short, thick, bushy beard but half concealed. Holding tightly to his other arm was a bareheaded man with pompadour hair and a narrow black mustache.

"As the prisoner was roughly hustled toward us by his captors, I was able to study him more closely, and at once began to revise my first unfavorable impression of him. What especially caught my attention were his eyes. They were of a warm blue-gray, contradictory as the terms may appear, and looked out fearlessly, yet with an unmistakably puzzled expression, from beneath rather heavy, clearly marked dark-brown eyebrows. A pleasant frankness, that shone through his obvious perplexity, did much to redeem the effect produced by his strangely mottled complexion. In figure, he was tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested—a splendid type of the natural athlete.

"The impression made upon my mind was that the policeman had got hold of the wrong man. Now, impressions are dangerous things, and you know that I always try to disregard them and to be guided, in arriving at my conclusions, only by proved facts. But when you come to consider how often the proved facts have confirmed my first impressions, you will admit, I think, that they should, in the absence of any facts, be allowed to have a certain value."

"Go ahead," I assented. "I shall admit anything, at this point of the story, rather than draw you into an argument. What happened next?"

"It was quite clear that my impression was not shared by the half-dozen or so men who pushed after the officer, the bareheaded man who proved to be the superintendent of the building—and their prisoner.

"Anarchist! 'Murderer!' 'Assassin!' were among the epithets that they hurled after the latter; and recommendations that he be strung up to the nearest lamp-post were freely made. The ugly temper of those who had assisted in the capture was quickly caught up by the crowd on the sidewalk; and Bergner, noting it, blew loudly on his whistle and rapped with his club for assistance.

"The consul-general was lying weak and faint, with his eyes closed and evidently in great pain, when the ugly man with the fine eyes and puzzled look was dragged before him.

"Is this the man that shot you? Can you identify him?" asked the officer.

"The Russian shook his head, but did not open his eyes. 'I told you,' he said feebly, 'that I did not see his face, only his hand holding the pistol as he fired from the window. But it will be easy to identify him,' he added, opening his eyes as if with a great effort. 'He had to pull the trigger with his middle finger, because the forefinger was cut off at the second joint. It was missing beyond the knuckle.'

"As he spoke, his eyes, glassy with suffering, met those of the prisoner, who impressively raised his two hands above his head. Although he wore heavy walking gloves, there was no indication that any of his digits was missing in whole or in part. Uttering a few words in a language that I did not understand, and that was probably Russian, the wounded man closed his eyes and relaxed into unconsciousness.

"If, as it seemed, the action of the prisoner had satisfied the count, such was not its effect upon the crowd.

"Show us your bare hands! Maybe he's got a false finger!' 'Look at his forefinger!' 'Pull off his gloves, officer!' they shouted.

"I looked to see the young man accede to the demands of the bystanders.

"Instead, with an obstinate gesture of refusal, he thrust his two hands firmly into his overcoat pockets."

CHAPTER II.

"I fancy I am too old a bird to be surprised at anything," continued Fenway; "but if the man's action merely interested me, it infuriated the more impressionable and already excited body of onlookers. They surged around the prisoner in a menacing fashion, and it required all the efforts of the three policemen—for another had come hurrying to the scene from Fifth Avenue—to keep them from trampling upon the unconscious form of the consul-general, in their eagerness to lay violent hands upon the suspect and to tear his hands from his pockets, shouting and threatening him with summary vengeance as they did so.

"Pulling their clubs from their pockets, the officers cleared a space around us, fortunately permitting me to remain with the physician within the circle. Then the burly Bergner turned his attention to the apparently unruffled cause of the tumult, and seizing him roughly by the right arm, endeavored to drag his hand to view.

"Show up, you!" he exclaimed. 'Let's have a look at your finger. You can't play any such games with me!'

"Without a change in his expression, but firmly setting his muscles—and they were powerful ones—to resist the policeman's efforts, the prisoner said in a perfectly even tone: 'One moment, officer.' Then, addressing the policeman who had placed him under arrest, he asked: 'You told me, when you were bringing me down-stairs, that anything I said might be used against me, did you not?' The cultivated, agreeably modulated tones of the man's voice confirmed the impression that had been made upon me by his eyes.

"I did that," replied the officer. 'What of it? Out with his hands, Berg.'

"Let me finish, please," continued the prisoner. 'A man accused of crime can-

not be made to testify against himself, can he?"

"That's the law, all right," broke in Bergner; "but what's that got to do with

"Then I claim the right to keep my hands covered; that's all," said the man, in a tone of finality.

"The point of law was too fine a one for the roughshod judgment of the 'pavement-hitters,' Bergner relaxed his grip slightly and looked at me with a glance of almost comical perplexity, as if seeking advice from a superior intelligence. The point was quite as novel to me as it was to him, and was one upon which I did not feel competent to decide offhand, even if I had possessed any authority to do so.

"However ingenious and even plausible the plea may have appeared to me, it served only to inflame the passions of the crowd, which pressed threateningly forward, encroaching upon the narrow circle around us, reaching out their hands as if to tear the prisoner from the police, and yelling: 'Lynch him!' 'Show us his hands!' 'What are you waiting for? He's the murderer all right!' 'He's a Rooshian anarchist!' 'String up the damned nihilist!'

"As Bergner again tightened his grasp upon the man's right arm, he was met with a further protest. 'Just one more question, officer.'

"Out with it then, and be quick about it!" said Bergner.

"If I should take off my gloves and should show you and these people that I have all my fingers complete on both hands, would you let me go?"

"Not on your life," replied Bergner, with a look of pained surprise; "not if you had six fingers, I wouldn't. You were in the flat from which this gent was shot—"

"And caught while trying to get away down the fire-escape, you damned assassin!" broke in the officer who had made the arrest.

"Go easy there, Finnegan, with your name-calling," cautioned the more phlegmatic German-American. "Trying to make your escape, were you?" he said, turning to his questioner. "Well,

then, I'd have to arrest you, no matter how many fingers you had, or if you hadn't any at all, for that matter."

"So I supposed," said the prisoner; "and since I am to be arrested anyhow, whether you see my hands or not, arrest me and let the judge decide on the question whether I must furnish evidence one way or the other in regard to my possible guilt. I shall go perfectly quietly and offer no resistance."

"As I caught Bergner's wavering glance at this suggestion, I took the responsibility of saying:

"That seems like pretty straight talk. You've got to hold a man innocent until he's proved guilty in court. Let him have his way. He may be in the right. I don't know. It's not for you or me to decide. Better put it to the man 'higher up.'"

"At that moment the rapid, nervous clingity, clingity, cling, cling, cling, of an ambulance, driven at break-neck speed from the direction of Fifth Avenue, was punctuated with the heavier clang, clang, clang, clang of a police patrol-wagon coming from Broadway. The simultaneous arrival of the two vehicles served to distract the attention of the crowd, and Finnegan hustled his unresisting charge into the 'hurry-up wagon,' while the squad of reserves drove back the people and allowed the ambulance surgeon to make a hasty examination of his patient.

"A rapid taking of notes and entering the names of witnesses followed; and then the ambulance galloped away toward Sixteenth Street with the still unconscious count; while the patrol-wagon with the prisoner turned and drove quickly to the West Thirtieth Street police-station.

"Catching Bergner's eye with a questioning glance and receiving an affirmative nod, I sprang upon the step as the wagon started, anxious to learn the sequel of the adventure and to see how far the arrested man's protest would be heeded and to discover why he made it. I could not help thinking that, whether his forefinger was missing or not, he was actuated by some deeper motive than was superficially apparent in his

insistence on his right to keep his hands covered. The man interested me, and I resolved to see the affair through to the end. It promised to furnish an instructive study in my peculiar line of sociological research.

"When Finnegan and Bergner haled their prisoner before the sergeant at the desk, he stood with absolutely composed mien, his hands thrust into his overcoat pockets. Still buttressing himself behind the plea that whatever he said might be used against him, he respectfully but decisively refused to furnish the smallest item of information in regard to himself, his name, age, nationality, occupation or anything else that would lead to his identification.

"He was accordingly entered upon the blotter as 'John Doe,' and by that name, for want of a better, I shall refer to him.

"When the two officers had described how Doe had refused to show them his hands, the sergeant in great indignation roughly ordered them to pull the man's hands from his pockets and to take off his gloves. But Doe's reassertion of what he claimed were his legal rights in the matter and the perfectly courteous manner in which he spoke, together with the lawyerlike way in which he argued his case, and something indefinable in his attitude that seemed to command respect and attention, caused the haughty autocrat of the police-station to hesitate.

"That's a new one on me," he exclaimed; "wait a minute, boys. I don't know what the captain would say. He's out." Then, glancing at the clock, he added: "It looks like a straight case, plain enough; but I'll put it up to the magistrate. There'll be little time lost. Here, bundle him into the wagon and hustle him down to Jefferson Market. You'll catch his honor before he goes to lunch. Where's the wagon? Didn't it wait? Ring it up in a hurry, then. There, Mr. Doe," he said to the unknown, "I'll give you that much run for your money."

"He paused for a moment in apparent indecision; and then, seizing the telephone on the desk, he called up the

central office and made a brief report of the incident and of his action, following it up with a similar communication to the office of the district attorney.

"That's cutting a big bunch of red tape with one snip of the shears," he said to me, in an audible aside. "I don't know if the man has me hypnotized or not; but I'll give him a chance to put Judge Marlowe and the lads from Center Street and Mulberry Street in a trance, anyhow."

"You're all right," I replied. "It's a clever point. I'm going down to see what comes of it."

"There's the wagon," said the sergeant, as it rattled up in front of the station. "Now, hike it, men," he added. "Phone up to me what the judge says."

"We were down in the court-room in a few minutes; but we had to wait half an hour, on account of a request that had been made to the magistrate from Mulberry Street, in order that the Central Office might be represented at the examination.

"It was our old friend, Detective-Sergeant Plimpton Rogers, who appeared on the scene in company with Deputy Assistant District Attorney Carmichael. Rogers came over to where I was sitting. He seemed to be in a rather unpleasant temper for him.

"What sort of funny business is this that you and the prisoner have been putting up?" he demanded. "It's the flimsiest excuse for gaining time that I ever heard of. Where do you come in on the deal I'd like to—"

"The clerk's rapping for order and calling the prisoner to the bridge interrupted Rogers' outbreak. After Finnegan and Bergner had made their brief statements, the magistrate asked Doe if he did not desire to be represented by counsel.

"Doe declined, and stated that he would, at least for the present, act as his own counsel, and felt quite capable of doing so. The magistrate advised him to reconsider his determination, told him that he was arrested on a very serious charge, and offered to adjourn the examination for a day to enable him to procure a lawyer.

"To this Mr. Carmichael entered a vehement objection. He called the magistrate's attention to the prisoner's refusal to show his bare hands, and urged that he should be forced to exhibit them at once. It was, he argued, impossible otherwise for the police to tell whether they had arrested the right man or not. There was no doubt that this mysterious John Doe should be held, in any event, as a suspicious person; but, if his forefinger proved to be missing, it would be conclusive evidence that they had the actual assassin. If the man's fingers were intact, it would show that he was merely an accomplice ingeniously seeking to gain time to permit his principal to escape.

"The magistrate made short work of Doe's reiterated plea that he should not be compelled to testify against himself by placing his fingers in evidence. 'That is all clever nonsense,' said his honor. 'If your argument held, it would nullify the right of search. A man under indictment might come into court wearing a mask and defy the witnesses for the people to identify him. Doe, remove your hands from your pockets and take off your gloves.'

"Doe refused; and the magistrate ordered the officers to remove the gloves by force. Doe thereupon called attention to the fact that he offered a technical resistance, and demanded that the fact be noted on the record.

"There was an eager craning of necks on the part of the officers, court attendants and the few spectators, as the man's hands were uncovered and lifted above his head.

"The forefinger of the right hand had recently been cut off at the second joint!"

CHAPTER III.

"Good work!" I exclaimed, as Fenway paused, apparently to mark the effect of his disclosure upon me. "Very dramatic, indeed; but it would have been more so if it had been less expected. I had no doubt from the beginning that your friend Doe's reason for keeping his finger covered was because he had lost it, to use a Hibernicism."

"That was because you were not there and were unable to observe the man's actions and his manner. Judge Marlowe again urged upon the prisoner the advisability of securing counsel and said that, on the evidence, he should have to hold Doe without bail to await the results of the injuries to Count Nazarov."

"Doe continued to refuse the magistrate's advice, and declared that what he needed was not a lawyer, but a good private detective, if there was one in New York."

"'Humph!' said the judge. 'Apparently you are a stranger in the city or you would have heard of Mr. Fenway, who appears to be taking so much interest in your case.'

"'Not necessarily,' replied Doe. 'Why not attribute my ignorance to the fact that I have never done anything that would lead me to suppose that I should need the services of a detective? In the meantime, I waive further examination, expecting to be remanded to the city prison. I should like, however, to have the privilege of consulting with this Mr. Fenway, if he will grant me the favor of a brief interview.'

"Doe's attitude was superb. He addressed the court with the assurance of a practised and practising lawyer, and with as much detachment as if he had no personal interest in the case.

"The judge looked at him with considerable surprise, and then, ordering the formal commitment papers to be made out, he told Doe that he could converse with me for a while in the pen, which was then unoccupied.

"I joined the cool and apparently unconcerned man with a feeling, I will admit, of curious expectancy, believing that I, at least, would soon be placed in possession of his secret. I was never more disappointed in my life.

"Doe began by apologizing for his ignorance of my qualifications, and then put a few searching questions to me in regard to my experience and methods. What I said appeared to satisfy him; for he soon broke off his queries in this direction with the abrupt statement:

"'Mr. Fenway, I wish to obtain your

services to discover the man who shot the Russian consul-general this morning.

"You began with an apology for not knowing about me," I answered. "It seems that I must begin in the same way. You will understand that it will be impossible for me to serve you unless I have your complete confidence."

"I trust that you will not make that a condition," replied Doe; "for I am not prepared to give it to you. If I were to tell you my reasons for wishing to preserve my incognito, you would, I am convinced, at once recognize their force. And that is why," he added, with a charmingly frank smile, "I am strengthened in my resolution not to do so. I believe, nevertheless, that we shall be able to come to a mutually satisfactory understanding and to work harmoniously together."

"I doubt it," I said; "but waiving that point for the moment, and granting that, in spite of the apparent evidence against you, you are not the guilty person, whom, if anybody, do you suspect?"

"I hoped, by leading him on, to involve him in some admission that would make him see the advisability of dealing with me as frankly in his words as in his smiles."

"Nobody," was his astonishing answer. "If I had the least suspicion as to who the count's assailant was, I should not ask for your help. If I had any clue to offer, I should give it to the police, who, no doubt, would follow it up, in spite of their belief that they have already got their hands on the villain. But being absolutely in the dark, myself, it is useless to hope for their co-operation. If you, or some one equally able in your profession—and I judge that no such person exists—will not help me, I must resign myself to my fate, which, in the not unlikely event of the death of Count Nazarov, is obviously the electric chair."

"The plea, although made in a perfectly composed tone, was a strong one, and I went so far as to say:

"What do you know, then, about the events of this morning and how much are you willing or able to tell me?"

"Just this," replied Doe. "I desired to rent an apartment, and with that object I called to look at a vacant flat on the second floor of the Davenport at about ten o'clock this morning. The superintendent was showing me through the rooms, when a message was brought to him by a hall-boy—a tall, slight, light-haired lad—that one of the tenants was waiting to speak with him in the hall. Asking me to excuse him for a few moments, the superintendent went out with the boy and I continued my inspection, passing through the dining-room into the kitchen. I noticed that a fire-escape led by the kitchen window, which looked out on the yards of the buildings on the south side of Thirty-fourth Street."

"Although the distance to the ground was not great, I was interested to see if the iron ladder, which was hauled up on the little balcony, would reach to the restricted areaway at the back of the house, or if it could, in an emergency, be so placed as to afford access to the yard of the building directly in the rear. I lowered the ladder to its place, and saw that it swung clear of the ground by about five or six feet, and that it was just too short to reach the fence that ran through the center of the block. I went down half-a-dozen rods and found that, unless it were steadied by some one below, it would afford but a ticklish and unsafe means of descent for frightened women and children who might be driven from the upper floors, especially if the fire should originate in the basement. I had begun to retrace my steps when I heard shouts of, 'There he is!' 'He's trying to escape!' 'Stop him!' 'Come back!' 'Shoot him!' and so forth."

"Looking up, I saw a policeman, the one whose name I later learned was Finnegan, pushing his way through a crowd of excited men who were looking out of the window and pointing, yelling and gesticulating at me."

"Finnegan had drawn his revolver, and at his invitation, so reinforced, to reascend, I continued my upward climb and was roughly hustled through the apartment, down the stairs and out upon

the sidewalk. During my brief transit the officer informed me that I was under arrest for shooting a man, and plied me with questions. I said nothing and asked nothing. It was not until I was confronted with the wounded man that I learned who he was and what had happened.

"Although I must have been on the fire-escape in the rear of the building at the moment that the count was shot, I had no witnesses to prove it; and I realized at once that I was in an unpleasant fix. But when the count declared that his assailant's forefinger was missing at the second joint, I perceived that I was the victim either of an extraordinary plot or of a still more extraordinary coincidence.

"At the first demand to see my hands, I did not hesitate to show them, gloved as they were, since it is my habit to stuff out the end of the forefinger of the right-hand glove with cotton. But when I was called upon to remove my gloves, I resolved to take refuge behind the provision that no man accused of crime can be required to testify against himself.

"That is absolutely all that I know about the crime that is not equally familiar to you; and that is the actual extent of my association with it. If I had committed the assault, I should, it seems to me, have arranged some effective means of escape. It should not have been difficult. The really guilty man appears to have had little trouble in getting away. But he must be found, and as quickly as possible. It is scarcely conceivable that, with the appearances so strongly against me as they are, the police will be inclined to look farther. It is for me, therefore, to unearth the real assailant. As personally I shall be unable to take active part in the search, I must have the most skilled assistance procurable; and it is for this reason that I have turned to you. If the trial-court accepts the testimony of my maimed hand, forcibly though it was extorted from me, not the most adroit lawyer in the land can save me from prolonged imprisonment at the best. Only the production of the real culprit

with incontestable evidence to prove his guilt will be of the least avail. That is my story. Will you undertake the search for the criminal?"

"And you accepted that unsubstantial and unsubstantiated tale, and engaged yourself to go ghost-chasing on the strength of it!" I exclaimed, gazing at Fenway in blank astonishment.

"I did not," he replied. "On the contrary, I declined to interest myself in the affair, unless Mr. Doe would tell me all the facts about himself that I desired to know.

"What possible bearing can any facts about me have on the case?" asked Doe. "I had nothing to do with it. It is the facts about the other fellow that I want and want you to get for me, and that I am ready to pay for. If I knew who he was or anything about him, I should tell you gladly. If you get on the track of any one and I find that he is some one in regard to whom I can furnish helpful information, do not doubt that I will give it to you."

"At this point I interrupted him with the remark that I was afraid he mistook my character entirely. 'I am not in the habit of manufacturing evidence,' I assured him, with some warmth.

"I hope not!" exclaimed Doe. "I should far rather suffer innocently myself than place any one else in the same unpleasant predicament. But I don't propose to suffer if I can help it, while the real criminal goes free.

"The whole problem resolves itself into this: A murderous assault has been made upon the Russian consul-general. An innocent man has been placed in arrest. The real criminal is at large. It is only necessary to find him to secure the release of the man unjustly suspected. The criminal must have been in the building, in a certain flat in that building, at the time. He must have had a motive for his act. He must have got away. He is a marked man. His forefinger is missing at the second joint.' Doe here held up his own abbreviated digit, still encased in white surgical plaster. "Such a person can surely be discovered. The number of people in New York so disfigured must

be very small. Smaller yet must be the number of those who could be associated with this crime. The present coincidence still further narrows the possibilities, if you will look at it in that light. But easy or difficult, it is just the sort of task that should appeal to you.'

"Of course, it appeals to me, as a problem," I replied; 'but I should be foolish to attempt to solve it, when I am given only half the conditions. Your personality may bulk more largely in it than you are willing to admit or may even suppose. You have said that the guilty man must have had a motive. He probably had. But it may have had nothing to do with the consul-general. Even granting everything that you say, the motive may have been to get you into just such a fix as that in which you now find yourself. The shooting may have been done by some enemy of yours. Your persistent incognito in itself suggests an enemy to be avoided. It is supposable that he could have followed you into the Davenport, taken advantage of your presence in the flat, and of the temporary absence of the janitor, to slip in and to shoot the first chance passer-by, slipping out again and leaving you to take the consequences. There might, again, have been some special reason why the choice of that particular target would strengthen the case against you. If that is so, your concealment of the fact might unduly increase the difficulty of finding the guilty man, perhaps render the task impossible.'

"Doe actually permitted himself to smile at my persistence. 'Your reasoning, from your point of view,' he declared, 'is almost irresistible; but there is another point of view to be considered, and that is mine. Surely I have more at stake in the affair than you have. If the disclosure of anything that I have elected to conceal would help you or me, I should be a fool to keep silent. I am not a fool. In fact, I am convinced that I am not only acting in my best interests but in yours, if you will agree to serve me, in refusing to complicate the problem by permitting you

to consider my personal equation as a factor. I shall employ every known legal device to postpone the trial as long as possible, and to keep it in the courts by appeal after appeal, if the verdict should go against me, in order to afford you all the time you need. Even if I am acquitted, I shall not rest or relax my efforts until the real criminal is brought to justice. You are not a lawyer, but an investigator, a detective; yet even a lawyer, if assigned to me by the court would be bound to make as good a fight for me as he could, whether I told him who I was or not.'

"That is so," I assented, 'but since I am not a lawyer, I cannot be assigned to help you; and, like many lawyers—the best lawyers, at all events—I do not take every case that is brought to me—divorce cases for example.'

"All the better," said Doe. 'That confirms me in my opinion that you are just the man to help me. You have made it clear that it is the difficulty rather than the simplicity of a problem that attracts you. Now tell me, have you ever had a case with more unsatisfactory and perplexing features presented to you than this one?'

"No," I answered unreservedly.

"Then it ought to appeal to you.'

"It does," I was forced to acknowledge.

"Then take it," said Doe.

"I will," I said. But I warned him that, although I might be working in a purely private capacity, my sole interest in the affair would be to discover the truth, and that, when I had discovered it, I should tell it, no matter whose ox might be gored. If he was willing to accept my services on those conditions, I was ready to go ahead.

"He declared that nothing could be more satisfactory to him; and so, here I am, about to work for a client whom I do not know and who absolutely refuses to tell me who he is. I admit that the man impressed me favorably from the first, in spite of the overwhelming weight of evidence against him. Impressions are dangerous guides, as I have always preached. At the same time, the studying and weighing of

character are as much a part of my business as the shifting and weighing of facts.

"Between the criminal and his pursuer there grows up in the course of time a psychical antagonism, subtle, if you will, but none the less recognizable. The types are antipodal. Of course, a signal, as it were, received by me during the course of an investigation, that I have met a person of the criminal type, is no indication that he or she has committed the particular crime on the solution of which I am intent. But when, on such a quest, I come within the magnetic field, if I may so term it, of a man or a woman, who, as in the case of Doe, commands my confidence, I can ordinarily discard that person as a witting factor in it. However, I shall rely upon you, old man, to help me in preserving an open mind in my investigations."

I hastened to assure Fenway on that score. I had not seen Doe, of course, and so had not come under his apparently hypnotic spell; but as I heard his story from Fenway, it struck me as being uncommonly fishy. I did not hesitate to say so, or to add that, in my opinion, the man was undoubtedly guilty.

"Then I shall find it out," said Fenway. "I shall take up the search for its own sake, and only accept a fee from Doe in case the solution bears out his contention."

"Doe is a very clever man, from your own showing," was my comment. "I wonder if he was clever enough to count on that."

"Perhaps," Fenway admitted; "then, all the more reason for getting at the very bottom facts of the case."

CHAPTER IV.

I saw that it was useless to argue further with my friend, and to tell the truth, in spite of my duly registered protests, I was so interested in the case myself that I should have been sorry to have him drop it. Perhaps my belief that Doe was guilty, and that Fenway's investigations would lead him to the

same conclusion, gave me a certain secret selfish satisfaction. For, although Fenway declared that he was concerned only in discovering the truth, I knew that he would be profoundly disappointed if his inquiries should indicate that Doe was indeed the criminal.

The seriousness of the case was greatly aggravated three days after the occurrences that I have just narrated, by the death of Count Nazaroff. He had continued in a state of semistupor, and seemed unable or unwilling to answer any of the questions addressed to him. It had been impossible to obtain anything in the way of an ante-mortem statement.

While the verdict of the coroner's jury was that the count had died "from the effects of a shot from a revolver," etc., Doctor Wendel, the coroner's physician, told Fenway that, in his opinion, the consul's death had been hastened by, if it was not directly due to, some severe mental shock, the effects of which, in the weakened condition induced by the bullet wound, he was unable to overcome.

Thus a new element of mystery was added to the affair. Had the count recognized the assailant? I wondered; and so, no doubt, did Fenway, if the presumably Russian words uttered by the consul-general would throw any light upon the subject. There was, however, no one among the witnesses who understood the language, nor were there any two who could agree as to the sound of the words.

In the meantime, Fenway had actively pursued his inquiries. He had questioned and cross-questioned the hall-boys, the elevator-boy and the superintendent of the Davenport, and they all united in declaring that no stranger whose presence could be unaccounted for had come into the house before the shooting or had gone out of it afterward. No one had called to look at the vacant flat that morning excepting the mysterious John Doe. Those who had been in on other errands had gone out again before Doe appeared; and the testimony was unanimous that he was the only person, not a tenant or an employee

of the building, in it at the time. Not one of those so accounted for had any of his or her fingers, or a part of one, missing.

"Accepting the statement of the various persons whom I have interrogated, and still assuming that Doe is innocent," Fenway declared, "there is still the possibility that some one had concealed himself in the building unknown to those in charge of or residing in it. It is, moreover, not impossible that some tenant or employee was in the plot and may have connived at or assisted in the entrance and exit of the man with the missing forefinger, unknown to the others."

Thereupon, he set a watch upon the movements of one and another of those whom he knew to have been in the house when the shooting took place. Late in the evening of the third day after the shooting he came into our apartment just as I was preparing for bed. It was evident from his manner that the day, clouded as it had been by the death of Count Nazaroff, had not been an entirely unsatisfactory one from my friend's point of view.

"Something doing?" I asked, throwing a dressing-gown around me, and sitting down by the fire to hear his report.

"Rather," said Fenway. "Listen to this: About half-past six this evening, after I had assigned several men to follow up any of the day-shift of the Davenport who might have errands abroad, I was about to come home, when I noticed Joseph Bean, the superintendent of the building, who had taken so prominent a part in the arrest of Doe, run quickly up the basement steps of the apartment-house and hasten toward Fifth Avenue. Regan, one of my men on watch, started after him, on the other side of the street. On the impulse, I joined in the chase, a little in the rear.

"Partly walking, and partly by the surface cars, Bean led us to East Seventh Street, where just off Tompkins Square, he ran down a flight of steps to a little cellar-shop under a delicatessen-shop in a tall double-decker tene-

ment. I could not see what he did there, but he came up almost instantly and went toward First Avenue. I had just time, as I passed the delicatessen-shop, to look down the stairs and to observe the sign over the door, 'Alexis Dmetrovitch, Upholsterer,' and the corner of a piece of white paper showing from under the door.

"Seeing that Regan was still on Bean's trail, I retraced my steps and went down to the upholstery-shop. The Russian name on the sign was enough to make me wish to learn something more of the man who bore it. The visit of the superintendent suggested a message of some sort, and the bit of white paper might throw some light upon its nature.

"The door was locked, and its solidly shuttered window prevented me from looking within. I reached down and withdrew the piece of white paper, which proved to be a lightly sealed envelope addressed to Dmetrovitch. I slipped it into my pocket and then stepped into the delicatessen-shop, and asked the rosy-cheeked German woman who kept it if she could tell me if Mr. Dmetrovitch was likely to return during the evening and if he lived as well as worked down-stairs.

"She knew nothing of her neighbor excepting what she had learned from observation, although she said he was seldom at his shop after a very early hour in the morning. She was able to give me, however, an excellent description of his appearance." She thought that most of his work was done at the houses of his patrons, and that it was foolish of him to pay rent for a shop under such circumstances. She did not know where he lived. If I had any message for him, I could leave it under the door, where he would get it in the morning or the next time he called.

"I thanked her for the suggestion, and went toward Second Avenue in search of a little Hungarian café that I remembered. Happening to encounter a police officer, I told him who I was and asked if he knew anything about Dmetrovitch, the upholsterer, and his little shop.

"You mean the tall, thin, stoop-shouldered chap, with the pockmarked face?"

"I said: 'Yes.'"

"Well, now, I'm only a short time on this beat," he said; "and at night; but I think it's mighty little upholstering is done in that cellar. I never see any work going on in there; but about once every week there's a lot of talking and smoking and rushing the growler. The place seems to be a sort of head-center for a gang of these long-haired Russian anarchists, who meet there Friday nights to chew the rag and drink beer and relieve their feelings in a lot of hot air. I've got my eye on 'em all right; but as long as they keep the peace and don't make any trouble, of course, I've no call to butt in. I guess they're harmless enough. There's a big colony of 'em in the next precinct, where I come from. They're long on gab, but short on action, except to take part in a torchlight procession, if there's a strike on, or if word comes that the Czar is massacring some more of his loyal subjects."

"Thanking the officer for his information, I hastened on to Second Avenue, and soon came to the café for which I was looking—one that had four or five little curtained stalls at one end for diners who desired a certain amount of privacy. Although the place was well filled, I was fortunate enough to find one of the cubicles empty, the frequenters of the place generally preferring the sociability of the large open room. Ordering the regular dinner and a pot of tea, I softened the gum on the flap of the envelope with the steam from the kettle, and easily opened it.

"The note which it contained was innocent enough on the surface, but was not without value as suggesting further lines of investigation. It was from one of the tenants of the Davenport, and read as follows:

MR. DMETROVITCH: Please come at once and finish the chairs. Your delay is greatly inconveniencing me. I am giving a dinner-party to-morrow night, and must have everything ready by three in the afternoon. Don't fail to come.

G. N. MILLER.

The Davenport, Dec. 20.

"I made a careful copy of the note, studying it from various points of view, after I had eaten a leisurely meal, but without being able to extract any recondite meaning from it; although doubtless the vivid imagination of a Serjeant Buzfuz would have seen in it a more incriminating document than Mr. Pickwick's communication in regard to chops and tomato sauce.

"Stopping at an apothecary's to borrow the wet end of a mucilage-brush, I resealed the envelope, and a few minutes later replaced it where I had found it. The proprietress of the delicatessen-shop assured me that Dmetrovitch had not returned during my absence.

"I went at once to the Davenport, and there learned that Gordon N. Miller, the writer of the note, occupied the flat on the second floor just across the hall from the vacant one from which the consul-general had been shot. He had lived there for more than a year, and was the New York representative of a well-known firm of French silk-manufacturers. He was at home, and, on my sending up my name, said that he would see me.

"There was nothing in Mr. Miller's manner or appearance, any more than there had been in the note, to indicate that he was likely to have had any association with the killing of Count Nazarov. He addressed me as Mr. Renwick, and asked how he could be of service to me. I saw that he did not recognize me as a detective, and took my cue accordingly.

"I apologized for my intrusion and told him that I had some furniture that needed repairing, and had heard of Dmetrovitch through an advertisement. Informed that the man had done some work for Mr. Miller, I had taken the liberty to call to inquire if he could recommend the Russian upholsterer.

"He has a good deal of front to refer to me," said Miller, with a laugh. "His work is all right. He's a good workman, yes; but he is too casual in his methods to suit me. He'll start on a job like a locomotive, but he runs out of steam too quick. You never know when he'll finish his run. He came here

four days ago to upholster my dining-room chairs, the covering of which proved to be so rotten that it tore if you touched it. The man came before seven in the morning and was working like a house afire when I went out to take the train for Boston, on a business trip. He said that the job would be done by evening. I returned this afternoon, and that is what I found.' Miller opened the door into the next room; half of the chairs were only covered in part.

"Wouldn't that jar you?" Miller continued, 'and I'm going to have a dinner-party to-morrow. I had to send a note to Dmetrovitch by hand this evening so that he would get at it the first thing in the morning. Judging by the time he gets around to work, he must leave before the first mail is delivered.'

"You thought it safe to leave him here when you went to Boston on Tuesday?" I asked.

"On Monday," Miller corrected me. 'Oh, yes; Bean, the superintendent, looks after my apartment; and I told him to keep an eye on the man when I went away. Evidently he didn't watch him any too closely, however.'

"Had you ever employed him previously?" I asked.

"Yes; once, a few weeks ago," replied Mr. Miller; 'but it was a small job, that could easily be finished in a few hours. Even then he left it half done and did not return until next day. But that time no inconvenience resulted. As I said before, he is an excellent workman—if you don't happen to be in a hurry.'

"How did you first hear of him?" I persisted.

"Through an advertising card dropped in my letter-box," Mr. Miller said.

"That seemed rather odd to me," Fenway interrupted himself to say. "Dmetrovitch's shop was far over on the East Side. It is the custom, of course, for small tradesmen so to inform persons in their neighborhood of their business; but it struck me as peculiar that the Russian cabinet-maker should have strayed so far out of his natural en-

vironment to distribute his announcements. Accordingly, I pursued my inquiries on this line.

"He certainly seems to be enterprising in drumming up trade," was my comment; 'but perhaps he is the regular upholsterer employed by the house.'

"No; I think not," said Miller; 'for when I spoke to the superintendent about the first job, he did not seem to have any one in particular to recommend. It was only a day or two afterward that I found Dmetrovitch's card, and sent for him.'

"I obtained a description of the man from Mr. Miller, which agreed perfectly with those furnished by the policeman and the woman in the delicatessen-shop; and, with a further apology for my intrusion, took my leave.

"Here, at last, was a clue that might lead to something definite. The Russian, Dmetrovitch, supposed to be an anarchist, had been in the Davenport the day before the shooting. Knowing that Miller was going to be away for several days, and that the superintendent was not too inquisitive, what was to prevent him, if he had any designs upon the life of Count Nazarov, from concealing himself in the apartment overnight, and watching his opportunity to kill him? He might have slipped into the vacant apartment, fired the shot, and slipped back again, without any one being the wiser, and have made his escape late at night. This, of course, was all theory, but it seemed worth looking into.

"Accordingly, before returning to the ground floor, I made the rounds of the other apartments to learn if other tenants had found Dmetrovitch's cards in their letter-boxes. Naturally, not all of them could remember one among the many advertising circulars and cards that are constantly being showered upon householders and flat-dwellers; but three or four had more or less distinct impressions of having seen the name, and one had preserved the card for a possible emergency.

"I borrowed it, and made the rounds of three or four other apartment-houses in the neighborhood, but without being able to discover any one who had ever

seen a similar card or to whom the name Dmetrovitch was in the least familiar. This, while not conclusive, seemed to indicate that the Davenport had been especially selected for 'salting' with the cards of the Russian upholsterer. Clearly the man was worth following up."

"How was he off for forefingers?" I asked.

"Unfortunately, I am still in the dark in that regard," Fenway answered. "Apparently the delicatessen lady, the officer and Mr. Miller had been equally unobservant of the man's hands. But that proves nothing pro or con. Persons so maimed are often very adroit in concealing their injuries. It becomes a matter of habit with them. Doe had only lately lost his finger; but there was nothing in Count Nazarov's words to indicate that fact. The man who really shot him may have lost his finger years ago. I shall have to wait, in all probability, until I see the man myself."

"And that is how the matter stands at present?" I asked.

"No; there is a little more," Fenway announced. "I went back to the Davenport, and found that the superintendent had just come in. I asked him about Dmetrovitch.

"Bean said that he had never seen or heard of the Russian until the man had come to do some work for Mr. Miller a few weeks before. Then he had come again, the day before the tragedy, and had worked for several hours in the apartment, he believed. Mr. Miller had told him to look after the man; but when he had found time to go to the apartment, the man was not there, though the work was not finished. Bean pondered a few moments, and then his face lighted up with a look of surprise and comprehension. Slapping himself on the thigh, he exclaimed:

"Isn't he a lanky, round-shouldered man that's had the smallpox?"

"So I understand," I answered.

"Then I believe he was in the crowd that came down-stairs with me and the cop after we caught that fellow Doe on the fire-escape. I was a good deal excited at the time, and did not notice any

one very closely; but I had a sort of feeling that I had seen that man before somewhere. He's a Russian, of course. Do you think he could have had anything to do with the murder? An accomplice, perhaps?"

"Bean was sure that the man had not remained in the apartment overnight, because he had gone all through it, when he went in on Monday. 'Yet how could the Russian have got in on Tuesday without being seen or without a key?' he asked.

"He had plenty of time to make a key, if he had wanted to," I suggested. 'He came very early on Monday, before seven. Couldn't he have come in the basement door on Tuesday and have gone up the back-stairs without being seen?"

"Bean doubted if Dmetrovitch could have got past the night-watchman, if he came before seven. 'I'll inquire now,' he said, and sent for the watchman.

"The watchman had seen no such man on Tuesday, he declared; but neither had he seen him on Monday, when the Russian had certainly been in the house. The watchman at last admitted that Dmetrovitch might have entered the basement door, unobserved, while he was sweeping the sidewalk, which he usually did at that hour.

"Listen," said Bean, suddenly; "if you want to lock the fellow up, I can tell you where he lives. I took a note to him from Mr. Miller this evening. It's way over by Tompkins Square. Mr. Miller gave me the note and forty cents to pay a messenger; but as I had an engagement on the East Side I thought I'd earn the money myself. The man's shop was shut up, and I slipped the envelope under the door."

"The superintendent appeared quite interested in the turn that my investigations had taken, and wondered, as you do, and as in fact, I do, if the Russian was 'shy a forefinger,' as he expressed it. That," Fenway declared, "is what it will be interesting to discover.

"Oh, there is one more thing," he added. "Regan met me outside the Davenport, and walked part way home with me. He had followed Bean to the

Elevated station at First Avenue and East Eighth Street. The superintendent had gone into one of a big row of flat-houses and had entered an apartment on the third floor. On looking at the letter-boxes, Regan had found the name 'Emanuel Bean' on one of them. The keeper of the cigar and news-stand on the ground floor told Regan that Emanuel Bean was a brother of the superintendent of the Davenport. That's all."

"And so you think that the Russian upholsterer, the suspected anarchist, is the real murderer, and that your friend Doe is going to be gloriously acquitted," I ventured to suggest.

"I don't think anything yet, and you know it," said Fenway, taking my remark a little more seriously than was his custom, "excepting that the affair promises some interesting complications. 'And so,' as Mr. Pepys would say, 'to bed.'"

CHAPTER V.

For a long time after the unexpected introduction of the mysterious Dmetrovitch into the case, Fenway made slow progress in his investigations.

The first setback occurred when he went the next morning to the upholsterer's little shop and found it doubly placarded with a "dispossess notice" and a "to let" sign. The note from Mr. Miller, however, had been removed.

Fenway went at once to the agent of the building and learned that Dmetrovitch had engaged the cellar two months before, paying a month's rent in advance. He had paid nothing more and could seldom be found at his place, so, after waiting until almost the end of the second month, the agent had taken the usual steps for his ejection. When the shop was opened three days later, nothing was found in it but an old table, two or three rickety chairs, a rough bench or two and a large assortment of Tolstoi's pamphlets and tracts.

Dmetrovitch himself had entirely disappeared. None of his little band of associates and compatriots came to seek him, although the woman in the deli-

catessen-shop had a volunteer assistant for two or three weeks, who spent more time looking out of the window than in selling sausages and sauerkraut.

In the meantime, Fenway became to all outward seeming a reporter for one of the socialist-labor newspapers of the East Side. He was incessant in his hunt for news items, especially among the groups of exiled Russian Revolutionists. He made friends with many of them, who furnished him with translations of the speeches made at the open meetings, and, as he gained their confidence, told him of some of the less conspicuous activities of the more restless and turbulent element among them. He inquired guardedly to discover if any of them knew aught of Dmetrovitch, but met with no suggestive response. The cabinet-maker was as if he had never been.

Doe, confined in the Tombs, preserved his consistently non-committal attitude. Fenway's report of what he had learned about Dmetrovitch interested the prisoner, but failed to elicit any helpful suggestions from him. He said that he had never heard of the man, and that he knew of no one answering to the description. Nothing resulted from Fenway's endeavors to discover if there was anything in Count Nazarov's history that would throw any light upon the murder. A man of equable and benevolent disposition, who had led a quiet, rather studious, life, and had been known for his liberal views; he seemed as little likely to be the victim of a personal as of a political foe.

At the briefly cabled request of his widow, his body had been sent to Russia for interment; but beyond the offer of a reward of a thousand dollars for the apprehension of the murderer, she evinced no further interest in the matter. The Russian vice-consul informed Fenway that he believed the countess was a semi-invalid, the state of whose health prevented her from leaving her home and accompanying her husband abroad.

As the count had not lived in Russia for more than twenty years, Fenway concluded that the nature of the count-

ess' indisposition had not improved her companionable qualities. This impression was strengthened when it was learned that the count had inherited a fortune so large that it was evident that even the liberal salary which he received could scarcely have offered him a sufficient inducement to endure the separation from his family if his home had been a congenial one. The three children of the count and countess, two daughters and a son, lived with their mother on a large estate in one of the Baltic provinces.

Failing to pick up any clue that led to Dmetrovitch, Fenway suggested going to Russia, and from there, following up the itinerary taken by Count Nazarov in his various consular appointments and transfers, with the hope of finding some point to start from. Doe appeared willing to accede to everything that Fenway proposed, but asked him, in any event, to postpone his departure until after the trial, the date for which was rapidly approaching, and meanwhile to continue his search for Dmetrovitch.

I had rarely seen Fenway so completely baffled; but then I had never known him to engage in a case that presented so many difficulties at the outset. He now took up with renewed energy, among the Russian colonies on the East Side, the inquiries which of late he had been pursuing only intermittently.

I had long ceased to inquire about the progress he was making or failing to make, and he, in turn, had become correspondingly uncommunicative, when something in the manner of his entrance one night caused me to ask, although perhaps with a touch of sarcasm:

"Found your friend Dmetrovitch?"

"No," he replied good-humoredly, "but cheer up, I've found some one else who apparently is as anxious to find him as I am."

"That sounds interesting," I exclaimed. "Who is it? Not Rogers?"

"Rogers? Not he!" replied Fenway. "He's absolutely positive that Doe is the guilty man. No; it's somebody far more interesting and attractive than Rogers; in fact, about the prettiest and

most intelligent young woman—girl, I might say—that I've encountered in a long time. Ah! I see that you are beginning to sit up and take notice after your long period of assumed indifference."

"And she's looking for the vanishing chair-mender, too, is she?" I asked. "Well, who is she and why does she want him? A deserted wife, for instance?"

Fenway laughed. "Hardly that," he said. "She's not his sort at all, even if she is associating with a job lot of Slavic exiles over on East Broadway. My dear boy, there's something about a well-bred, refined woman that a shabby dress and uncongenial associations not only fail to hide, but serve rather to accentuate. You can't fool your Uncle Abner where the fair sex is concerned."

"Lucky man!" I cried. "Come, tell me about your new coadjutor."

"You anticipate," said Fenway. "She's not that, yet; but she shall be, whether she wishes it or knows it. Better light a fresh cigar while I talk. I don't want to be interrupted."

"I have noticed, two or three times lately at the East Side meetings I have attended, a young woman of more than ordinarily attractive appearance, who seemed, excepting for her rusty black dress and plain sailor hat, singularly out of place among those rabid Russian Revolutionists. Still, one meets all sorts of peculiar types in such gatherings, men and women of culture mingling with artisans and laborers, and discussing with them the unhappy conditions of their native land, which they hope, at a distance of five thousand miles, to improve by such reformatory instruments as dynamite and gunpowder."

"There was something about this girl, however, that seemed to set her apart in a class by herself. She was young, not more than twenty-two or twenty-three, with a beautiful white skin, that flushed quite bewitchingly under the influence of any little excitement. Her features were delicate, yet molded on lines of strength. Dark-brown, almost black, eyes flashed out from beneath finely

arched eyebrows; while masses of light-brown hair, shot through with gleams of golden red where the light caught it, waved back from a splendid forehead and were gathered loosely in a great coil at the neck. She was a woman to wonder at and to admire; and I did both.

"This evening I went to a meeting of one of the 'centers' of the Revolutionary movement, admission to which was only obtained by introduction, accomplished in my case by my friend Bergoff, the editor of the paper for which I am supposed to be working. Several speeches of an inflammatory nature were made; and, in the course of the general debate that followed, the young woman whom I have just described took fire from a remark of one of the speakers, and, rising to her feet, spoke rapidly and earnestly for fully fifteen minutes. Of course, I could not understand what she said; but the others did, and listened with rapt attention, breaking forth into cheers when she finished and sat down.

"Who is she?" I asked Bergoff.

"Her name is Telka Tsernikoff," he said. "She has come over to America to escape arrest for complicity in one of the student demonstrations in Moscow. She brought letters to the Michaelovitches, and they got a place for her in a feather factory in West Houston Street. Her family?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Unless our friends tell us we do not ask. Sometimes it is better not to know. In the ideal republic it is only the individual that counts. But has she not much magnetism and enthusiasm, also beauty?"

"I acknowledged that such was indeed the case.

"The meeting was a long time in breaking up after the nominal adjournment, the members forming little groups, some quietly, others excitedly, discussing the topics of the evening. In the circle of which Miss Tsernikoff was the animated center, I noticed two or three new faces; and, at my suggestion, Bergoff and I moved over to it. Bergoff made some remark in German, which served to switch the conversation into that language, which most of them

spoke, thus enabling me to join in the talk.

"It was not long before I found an opportunity to tag one of my statements with, 'such at least was Dmetrovitch's contention.' It was a shot at a venture; but the sentiment to which I had given utterance was sufficiently Tolstoian in tone, without being too specific, to have been made by almost any disciple of the great Russian.

"The girl at once caught up my remark, and began to argue that Dmetrovitch held a directly contrary opinion, quoting volubly from speeches he made in Moscow.

"Ah!" I said. "But perhaps we are not referring to the same Dmetrovitch. I was speaking of Alexis Dmetrovitch."

"Yes, surely, and so was I. What other Dmetrovitch should we be talking about? Do you not agree with me?" she asked, turning to one and another of the group for confirmation. "Dmetrovitch was a purely destructive anarchist. He had not risen to the comprehension of the splendid modern structure to be erected out of and upon the ruins of a splendid but obsolete past."

"She sought in vain for any substantiation of her estimate of Dmetrovitch's political tenets. Those to whom she appealed had apparently never heard of the man. This gave me the boldness to say:

"True; but you knew him only in Russia, before he had come under the broadening influences of our free institutions. Who can doubt that he did feel them, grew and developed under them, when he is my authority for the statement to which you have taken exception?"

"Perhaps he adapted his utterances to his audience," retorted the girl, looking at me sharply. "I judge that he adhered to the views I knew him to possess by what he did rather than by what he said. 'Actions speak louder than words.'"

"I glanced around at the faces of the little circle to see if this almost unmistakable allusion to the assassination of Count Nazaroff met with any response. Their expressions were disconcertingly

blank. One beetle-browed little Slav, who looked like a shoemaker, asked:

"Who is this Dmetrovitch? I don't know him. What did he do?"

"Oh! if you don't know, I suppose I must keep his secret. But I am only recently arrived. I thought he was one of us," Miss Tsernikoff replied, and quickly changed the subject.

"But when we finally dispersed—at the significant hint of the proprietor of the hall, who went about turning out the lights—I found myself, with little need to maneuver for position, leaving the building in the young woman's company.

"Dmetrovitch seems to have kept much by himself in America," she said, looking up at me brightly. "It is strange that, of all the people I have met here, you, a German-American, should have been the only person to have known him."

"Perhaps his object was not to involve others in the consequences of his act," I said, aiming at the opening made by my first chance shot.

"Perhaps," she answered musingly. "I should like to talk more with you about him, some time soon," she added; "but now I must go home. We toilers must have sleep or we cannot work."

"Let me walk a little way with you then," I suggested. "I, too, should like to know a little more about Alexis Dmetrovitch, whom I knew, indeed, but slightly; but who interested me greatly. He seemed to be of an uncommon type."

"Uncommon, surely," she assented, as without further ceremony we moved along together, "if he preferred action to talk; or, having resolved to act, refrained from taking every other Russian into his confidence. But you—how came he to confide in you?"

"He did not," I said.

"Then how did you know?" she exclaimed, looking at me wonderingly.

"By the merest accident," I explained. "I happened to be 'one of those present' on the occasion to which you refer."

"You were there?" She gave a startled cry, and stopped to scrutinize me closely under an electric street-light.

"Wait a moment," she said, a sudden light breaking through the look of momentary perplexity in her dark eyes. "Then, then," she exclaimed, "you are not Herr Haberman at all—but Mr. Fenway, the criminal investigator! We are well met!"

CHAPTER VI.

"Bravo! bravo!" I shouted, applauding vigorously. "That was truly a dramatic moment. But I forgot; I was not to interrupt."

Fenway laughed. "Your interruption was well timed," he declared. "I should have been disappointed if you had failed so to punctuate my narrative at its unexpected climax. As to the sequel, I am afraid that I shall have to add the tantalizing foot-line: 'To be continued in our next.'"

"You don't mean to say that your conversation stopped short at that breathless instant?" I exclaimed. "Or are you simply seeking to punish me for my former incredulity and present levity?"

"You shall judge for yourself," Fenway continued. "I acknowledged at once that her surmise was correct, and was about to ask her some leading questions. Evidently divining my intention, she held up her hand and said:

"I have much—many things to tell you and to ask you. But this is not the place or the time. Besides, I must collect my thoughts. Where and when can I see you?"

"To-morrow morning at my office; or, better yet, at my apartment in the evening. I have important engagements in the daytime. Come to my rooms at half-past eight." She took my address, and, as we had by that time arrived at her lodgings, I bade her good night—and here I am."

"Who do you think she is, and what do you suppose her interest in the affair can be?" I asked.

"To discover that, if possible, is my 'important business' of to-morrow," said Fenway. "Her encounter with me may not be so accidental as it appeared."

Fenway was up and out early the next morning, and only returned in time for dinner. As we sat in the study over our coffee and cigars, he related the unsatisfactory nature of his day's work. Old Michaelovitch, the watchmaker, knew nothing more about Telka Tsernikoff than Fenway had learned from Bergoff. She had brought a letter to him, it was true, but it commended the girl merely as a student who had become involved in some petty outbreak. The letter was from a member of the family of one of the professors. His name, for political reasons, Michaelovitch steadfastly refused to disclose. The letter of introduction, he assured Fenway, he had shown to three or four friends, and then destroyed. Further inquiries among Michaelovitch's closest associates had failed to elicit anything more definite than this.

"It is clear," Fenway concluded, "that I must do my fighting in the dark, excepting for what light I can get the young woman to throw upon the subject herself. However, it will make the interview all the more interesting. That is she, probably, now," he added, looking at the clock, the hands of which pointed to half-past eight, as the door-bell rang.

"Show the lady in here, Garvin," Fenway said, as our faithful attendant passed through the hall to open the door.

The young lady who was presently ushered into the study was a striking contrast to the girl that Fenway had described.

She was richly dressed in a well-hanging black lady's-cloth skirt, while a short, tight-fitting Persian lamb jacket emphasized a slender but well-rounded figure. A toque of the same fur was perched coquettishly on the thick masses of her naturally wavy hair, not carelessly bunched at the neck, but piled up in all the intricacies of the coiffeur's art. A black aigret, fastened with a gleaming emerald, was her bonnet's only ornament, and gave her a foreign, rather military air. From beneath the broad band of fur-trimming on her skirt peeped out two small feet daintily shod in patent leather. Long black suède

gloves crinkled above her wrists beneath the slightly open sleeves of her jacket. This was no West Houston Street feather-worker.

If Fenway's surprise was equal to mine, he gave no token of it. Nothing ever really surprised him, any more than anything ever escaped him. He greeted the visitor cordially, introduced me, and offered her a cigarette. She declined it, but begged us to continue smoking. Her manners were those of a woman of the world, assured of her position, and frankly meeting an unusual situation with ease and tact. Her beauty—well, in my opinion, Fenway had done but scant justice to it in what had seemed to me, the night before, his extravagant hyperboles. A dangerous woman, I believed, for even so cool-headed a man as Fenway to cross swords with, if she elected to remove the button from her foil.

"I fear that Mr. Fenway spent a less profitable day than I did, judging from Mr. Michaelovitch's report to me of the direction of Herr Haberman's activities. I, at least, earned a dollar and thirty-nine cents at my trade," she said, with a smile, as she settled into the chair which I pushed forward for her. Her English was perfect; her intonation, rather than an accent, alone suggesting her foreign birth.

"It is evident," replied Fenway, "that Mademoiselle Tsernikoff not only knows how to make money, but how to spend it to advantage."

"*Touché!*" she cried, with a merry laugh, seeming to have divined my mental analogy of the *école d'escrime*. "But I come, not to have a bout with you, but to offer you my services as a second, if you will accept them. That will be much pleasanter. To fight with real enemies is more exhilarating, more exciting, is it not, than to meet even the most expert fencing master in mimic combat in the salle?"

"I gladly welcome the generously offered aid of so fair and so expert a supporter," said Fenway. "And how shall I proclaim her?"

"As you will," replied the girl. "Why not as Telka Tsernikoff, the feather-

worker? Surely the gallant knight does not pause in the heat of the conflict to demand the genealogy of the squire who rides up with succor at the crisis of the battle?"

"Truly said," admitted Fenway; "and yet, at the risk of appearing ungracious, let me suggest that the battling knight, on perceiving the approach of a strange warrior, may be pardoned for at least wondering if the newcomer is to prove a friend in need or a foe in disguise."

"Well spoken," granted our guest; "but he must be content to learn the stranger's intentions from his actions. If they prove friendly, friendship is established, an alliance is effected and the knight would indeed be ungracious who would be unwilling to wait until the fight was won to learn if the volunteer were worthy of his continued esteem."

"*Touché!*" cried Fenway in his turn. "Tell me, then, how I can help you? Or, since you put it that way, how I may best avail myself of your services? What do you know about Alexis Dmetrovitch?"

"I? Nothing. What do you?" replied Mademoiselle Tsernikoff, answering question with question.

"Nothing?" exclaimed Fenway. "Then you are seeking aid, not bringing it, after all?"

"Not so," protested Mademoiselle Tsernikoff. "But if you will tell me what you have learned, I am in a far better position than you to get further information without arousing suspicion. Yet, since we are to fight side by side, it will be well for you to know something of my arms and equipment, in order that you may be the better able to direct my efforts against our common foe."

"I was in Russia when the news was received of the assassination of Count Nazarovff," Mademoiselle Tsernikoff began. "The cabled descriptions of the man charged with the crime threw no light on his studiously concealed identity. The mention of the missing forefinger afforded no clue upon which the count's friends or the police could work. Even in Revolutionary circles, where the consul-general was held in

high esteem as an official of liberal views, there was no one who knew of any one so peculiarly marked who could be regarded as either a public or private enemy of the count."

"It was at first believed that the government would send over one or two police officials in an effort to identify the prisoner; but upon the receipt of later reports, the case against the man under arrest appeared to be so conclusive, and the photograph sent to the authorities so little resembled anybody that they had ever seen or heard of, that it was decided that nothing would be gained by so doing, and that the punishment of the guilty man could safely be left to the New York courts."

"Not long afterward the arrest of some of my friends for participation in a student demonstration made it advisable for me to leave my country, if I hoped to escape a similar fate. In the course of my travels I learned two important facts—who the man was who had been arrested for the murder of Count Nazarovff, and that he was innocent of the crime. Accordingly, I came to New York immediately, to do what I could to save him. I soon saw that, to accomplish this, I must first discover the actual murderer."

"My task was rendered doubly difficult by the impossibility of my holding any communication with the prisoner—this mysterious John Doe—or even permitting him to suspect that I was trying to help him. Believe me, I wasted no time. On the very day of my arrival in the city, I drove to the Davenport apartments and engaged the flat, fortunately still vacant, from the window of which the count had been shot. My renting this apartment gave me ample excuse to discuss the details of the affair with the various employees of the house, who had been there at the time."

"Everything that I heard seemed to point directly to the man known only as John Doe, as the assassin, until an interview with the night-watchman put me on the track of the Russian upholsterer, Alexis Dmetrovitch. The name was entirely unknown to me, and the vague description given me by the

watchman did not suggest any one of whom I had ever heard.

"This proved to be less strange when he admitted that he had never seen Dmetrovitch, but had only heard of him through some questions asked him by Mr. Fenway, a detective, and by the former superintendent of the house.

"My efforts to discover the whereabouts of this Mr. Bean were unsuccessful. He had resigned a short time before I came, and had left no address, although it was believed that he had gone to Chicago. When I sought to see the Mr. Miller for whom Dmetrovitch had worked, I learned that he had recently gone to France on a business trip. Baffled at every point, I determined to seek information about the mysterious upholsterer among the Russian Revolutionaries of the East Side, but with the utmost caution, and without arousing the least suspicion of my object. If, as I was—and am—convinced, Dmetrovitch is the real assassin, I knew that he would be protected by his compatriots, even by those who might not approve of his act.

"I had provided myself with letters to members of the Russian colony; and, donning an old suit and hat, I presented my credentials. Through the friendly offices of the Michaelovitches, I was soon established in lodgings appropriate to my supposed means, had secured employment, and was introduced into the Revolutionary circles of the quarter.

"I did not dare to make any direct inquiries in regard to Dmetrovitch lest, in the event of his arrest and conviction, I should be regarded as a traitor to the cause of Russian liberty, and shut out from all avenues of information.

"I did not know where the man lived or where he had his shop, and the casual allusions to him that I dropped in conversation with my new-found friends awakened no responsive echo. Either the man was not known in the colony or else there was an extraordinarily unanimous determination to protect him by ignoring his existence.

"There was, however, apparently no ban of silence upon the topic of the killing of Count Nazarov. While much

wonder was expressed as to who the mysterious John Doe could be, I heard no one utter a doubt that the man arrested was the guilty person. My quandary increased as time went on. I despaired of accomplishing my object unaided, and, as a last resort, decided to seek the help of the police."

I glanced quickly at Fenway; but his well-schooled features gave no hint of his mental state.

"One of my first acts on arriving in New York," continued Mademoiselle Tsernikoff, "had been to go to the Astor Library and to read carefully in the files of all the newspapers the accounts of the murder and of the events growing out of it. In this way I learned that Detective-Sergeant Rogers was the officer who seemed to have charge of the police end of the case; and two days ago I wrote him a letter asking him to meet me at my apartment at the Davenport, which I still retain, though I use it but little.

"He came yesterday, and I told him what I have just told you. He appeared to attach little importance to my suspicions in regard to Dmetrovitch. He said that the evidence against John Doe was uncontroverted and uncontrovertible, and that the man's persistent silence was only added proof of his guilt.

"Mr. Rogers paid no heed to my assurance that I knew Doe to be innocent. He said that if I really knew who Doe was, and kept silent, it must be because my speaking would injure him.

"I replied that I must keep silent for the same reason that Doe did, that I felt that he was acting wisely under the circumstances, so far as I knew them, and that, in any event, I should have to respect his wishes as expressed by his actions.

"Mr. Rogers plied me with questions in his effort to learn more about me and my particular interest in John Doe. I gave him no satisfaction; for my identity has as little bearing on the case as that of the man who is in the Tombs. At last he appeared to see that it was useless to attempt to get me to commit myself further, and rose to go, saying:

"I am afraid you have come to the

wrong shop with your story. It would probably appeal more strongly to my friend Mr. Fenway, who seems to have fallen under the spell of the prisoner's personality—or of his pocketbook."

"He refused to say anything further, as if suddenly realizing that he had already said more than he had intended, and took his leave.

"I changed my gown and returned to my little room on East Broadway. I was dubious about acting on the suggestion dropped by Mr. Rogers, fearing that, after all, he might have made it from some ulterior motive. Your name had been mentioned by the night-watchman, and I had read it in the newspaper accounts of the murder and of the coroner's inquest, and I knew that you had been in consultation with the prisoner in the police-court.

"I hesitated to come into too close relations with any one who might be in the confidence of the accused man; and while I was still undecided as to what to do, I attended the meeting at Arcadia Hall last evening.

"The remark that you made about Dmetrovitch was the first mention of the name of the man for whom I was seeking that I had heard since my arrival in New York; and I caught you up with a contradiction, not because I know anything about him or his opinions, but simply in order to draw you out and to discover, if possible, the extent of your acquaintance with him. When, later, I discovered, by your admission, that you were probably nearly as ignorant as I was, and that you had been one of the witnesses of John Doe's arrest, I guessed who you really were, and found that I was right.

"I now renew the offer of my services in following up Dmetrovitch, and ask only that you say absolutely nothing about me to your client."

Fenway looked keenly at the speaker and asked:

"Would that be quite fair to him?"

"Why not?" was the quick reply.

"Are you bound to take him into your confidence in regard to the people whom you employ to assist you? Has he taken you so completely into his confidence

that you feel the necessity of equal frankness with him?"

"So you would like to know how far Mr. Doe has entrusted me with the secrets that he has so jealously preserved from others?" Fenway said, warding off her sharp thrust with a ready verbal counter.

"Only to confirm my conviction that he has told you nothing," answered Mademoiselle Tsernikoff.

"Then you think that if he had told me who he is, I should not have been so ready to help him?" Fenway asked.

"That went home!" cried the girl, with a smile of triumph. "I was right. He has kept silent. Really, I had no doubt of it. But even if he had told you all, I should still rely upon your keen sense of honor to comply with my request, since you will observe how completely I have trusted to it. I did not make the request until I had put myself at your mercy."

"I understood," replied Fenway, "that it was a condition that you made, not a favor that you begged."

"Then I expressed myself poorly," said Mademoiselle Tsernikoff. "Nothing but your absolute refusal to accept my services can prevent me from helping you. Even so, I shall not relax my own efforts. If you are truly anxious to help Doe, you will accept my offer and grant my request. I throw myself on your generosity. Our success means as much to me as it does to him. Surely, if you could agree to help an unknown prisoner, you can accept the aid of an unknown assistant. I do not believe, as Mr. Rogers implied, that you have taken up this case from mercenary motives. What I have seen of you to-night convinces me to the contrary. I respect your scruples. They give me additional confidence in you and in your ultimate success. But this affair has already presented many unusual features. The secrecy that I ask in regard to my participation in it is only a logical sequence of the secrecy that your client has rightly seen fit to maintain. Nothing will be gained by ignoring my request, and much will be risked. But my anxiety makes me oversolicitous.

Why should I seek to exact promises from you, when I already trust you implicitly?"

"*Touché*, again!" Fenway gallantly admitted. "After this personal experience of your prowess, I should be a churl indeed to decline your offer."

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed the girl, her eyes filling with tears in the moment of her victory. "You will not repent having made me your ally. Now, tell me what you have learned about Dmetrovitch."

Having taken the plunge, Fenway did not hesitate to relate what little he had been able to discover about the elusive cabinet-maker. When he described the man's appearance, Mademoiselle Tsernikoff suddenly interrupted him, echoing his words:

"Tall, thin, stoop-shouldered, pock-marked—and an upholsterer! Paul Verisoff! How we have wasted time!" Her face fell. Disappointment was written in every line of it.

"Perhaps," said Fenway; "but, at least, if you are sure that the description fits the man you name, we have already made up for much of the time that has been lost, and have taken a long step in advance."

"Oh, not that! Not that!" cried the girl. "If the supposed Alexis Dmetrovitch is indeed Paul Verisoff, we are far, far on the wrong track. He is incapable of such a deed!"

CHAPTER VII.

As Mademoiselle Tsernikoff made the foregoing remark, she buried her face in her hands with a despairing gesture. Catching Fenway's eye, I winked. There was no doubt in my mind that the girl's interest was in saving Verisoff, or Dmetrovitch, rather than Doe.

Hardly a second did our visitor keep her face concealed. Throwing down her hands with an impatient movement, she sat up and looked first at Fenway and then at me. Either intuition or something like telepathic insight seemed to make her aware of the message flashed from me to him.

"You doubt me!" she cried. "Don't, don't do it! Let me tell you about Verisoff. His history is well known. You can easily test the truth of my words. While your description of Verisoff fits Dmetrovitch perfectly, I base my belief in his innocence on two facts. In the first place, he is a devoted follower of Count Tolstoi; in the second place, he is an arrant coward."

Fenway's eyes seemed to bore into the very soul of Mademoiselle Tsernikoff through his half-closed lids. She had scored one point, as both he and I knew; for all the literature found in the upholsterer's deserted cellar had been the writings of the Russian apostle of peaceful revolution.

"It is only for the last year or so that Verisoff has pinned his faith to Tolstoi," Mademoiselle Tsernikoff continued. "Before that time he had been one of the most rabid of the destructive school of anarchists. Dynamite was his one cure for every social and political evil. Suddenly, the lot fell upon him to hurl a bomb into the carriage of the deputy chief of police of Moscow, as he was driving to a reception. The appointed moment came and passed—and nothing happened. At first, it was feared that the plot had been discovered and Verisoff arrested. Instead, he was found, quaking with fear, in bed—the bomb reposing, meanwhile, at the bottom of a pail of water! It seems a miracle that Verisoff escaped with his life.

"But his former friends had larger game in view and, only stopping long enough to pour over him the icy contents of the pail, they hurried away with the bomb, which had been too carefully made to suffer from its immersion. That very afternoon, in other hands, the missile went to its mark, and Verisoff became a disciple of Tolstoi.

"Shunned on all sides, Verisoff was forced to associate with a little band of similar outcasts, brought together by a community of poltroonery. Before long the entire coterie of ten or a dozen emigrated to America. It would be but natural that, on arriving in New York, they should keep by themselves, and that their doings should have been lit-

tle noticed by their compatriots. If Dmetrovitch was an assumed name and Verisoff seldom at his shop, it is quite possible that his presence in the city should have escaped the attention of the few who may have known him in Russia. I cannot picture him to myself as engaging in a plot to assassinate the consul-general. On the other hand, if he had happened by accident to be in the building at the time of the shooting, and, rushing out to learn the cause of the disturbance, had discovered that the victim was a Russian official of high rank, it would have been quite in keeping with his character for him to have run away, fearing that he might be arrested on suspicion."

"The hypothesis is logical enough from what you have told me of the man's history," Fenway admitted. "But it introduces another element of coincidence that I do not like. In order to bring myself to undertake my present investigation, I have been forced to accept as a fact one remarkable coincidence—that there were in the Davenport, on the day of the murder, two men, each lacking a forefinger, one of whom was guilty and the other innocent. To admit that accident should have brought into the house, at the same time, an exiled Russian Terrorist, seems putting the doctrine of probabilities to too severe a strain."

"But perhaps Verisoff was not in the building by accident," interposed Mademoiselle Tsernikoff. "His presence may have been contrived by the real murderer for the purpose of diverting suspicion from himself. The attack on the consul-general may have been planned long in advance. That would remove the second element of chance that you dislike."

"Would you implicate Mr. Miller in the crime?" asked Fenway. "He was in Boston on December seventeenth; and I have convinced myself by careful inquiry that he probably did not even know Count Nazarov by sight."

"Then we must eliminate Mr. Miller," Mademoiselle Tsernikoff agreed. "Who else was acquainted with the upholsterer and knew or could have known that

he was in the building—perhaps have arranged to have him there? The superintendent!" she exclaimed excitedly. "Who is he? What do you know about him? He, too, has disappeared."

I could not but be amused at our visitor's too obvious efforts to lead the trail away from Dmetrovitch, or Verisoff, as she preferred to call him. I watched to see how Fenway would treat this invitation to follow her into the realms of imagination and extravagant conjecture.

"The point is worth considering," Fenway answered gravely. It was evident to me that my friend was leading the girl on to commit herself in some way. "There is nothing necessarily significant in Bean's absence from the city," he continued, "if he has, indeed, gone to Chicago. He is an important witness for the people against John Doe, and it is not likely that either the district attorney's office or the police have allowed him to leave their jurisdiction without taking measures to assure his return when needed."

"That may be so, and may be not," broke in Mademoiselle Tsernikoff. "If the man is not mixed up in the crime, no doubt he will return for the trial; perhaps he will, if he is. But in that case, he is more likely planning to stay away from it."

"That will be all the better for John Doe, will it not?" Fenway asked pointedly.

The girl stamped her foot impatiently and, rising from her chair, took a rapid turn across the room to the mantel, before she replied:

"You still distrust me! You believe that my sole interest is to screen that ignoble Verisoff? You think I am an enemy of John Doe and, for that reason, wish to conceal from him my offer to help you. You think——"

"Pardon me," Fenway interposed, "I think nothing, believe nothing; but in justice to my client, and to myself, I am compelled to test every statement that you make. If you are truly a friend of his, you would not have it otherwise."

"Perhaps not," she replied; "but if you are able to preserve an impartial

attitude, your friend, Mr. Walford, is not—who sits there, saying nothing, but looking volumes! How can I convince you of my sincerity?"

The expression of utter blankness that I at once endeavored to assume at this outburst evidently struck the girl as something very amusing; for she broke out into a merry ripple of laughter, in which Fenway heartily joined; and I, too, was unable to resist the infection of their mirth, and smiled broadly, if somewhat sheepishly in sympathy.

This little incident, occurring so spontaneously and unaffectedly, revealing the natural and mercurial temperament of our visitor, did more to clear the atmosphere than reams of argument and tons of proof.

"Excuse me," said the girl, "but you were too funny!" Then her face grew serious again. Turning to Fenway, she proceeded: "You have declared that what you seek in your investigations is the truth. So it is with me, because I believe, because I know, that the truth will acquit your client. Pursue your inquiries in regard to Dmetrovitch, if you will, either with or without my help; but do not neglect to follow up Mr. Bean. If you do not desire to have him for a witness at the trial, there is no reason why you should help to bring him here. But in the interests of truth, of justice, find him, look up his record, trace his actions, and do not remit your efforts until you are satisfied that he could have had nothing to do with the shooting."

"That is sound argument and a fair proposal," Fenway said. "It may interest you to learn that I am not so ignorant of the man or of his whereabouts as you have supposed. As soon as I discovered that he had left the Davenport, and presumably the city, I proceeded to get in touch with him through his brother, who, as I had learned from my assistant, Mr. Regan, lives in a flat in the up-town Italian quarter on the East Side."

"Why does he live in the Italian quarter?" exclaimed Mademoiselle Tsernikoff, an excited look flashing from her eyes.

"I suppose because he is an Italian," Fenway replied.

"But you say that he is a brother of Mr. Bean. Bean is not an Italian name. I know Italy, but not Beans."

"I am sure you do," Fenway declared, with difficulty repressing a smile at the expression into which her unfamiliarity with American slang had committed her.

"Yes?" she said doubtfully, misunderstanding his meaning. "Of course, the Favas! Fava means bean. He is perhaps of a poor branch of that Roman family and has Anglicized his name."

"No," replied Fenway; "he does not boast any so high connections. He and his brother come from Palermo and are——"

"Sicilians!" cried Mademoiselle Tsernikoff.

"Obviously," continued Fenway; "and in adopting an English name, the brothers have followed the sound rather than the sense. In Sicily Joseph and Emanuel Bean were Giuseppe and Emanuele——"

"Biani! Is it not so?" Mademoiselle Tsernikoff demanded, her face, her figure, all animation, as she stood by the fireplace.

"You have guessed correctly," Fenway said.

"Then you need look no farther!" she cried in triumph. "Giuseppe Biani is the guilty man!"

"Giuseppe Biani is his name," said Fenway calmly. "What makes you so certain that he killed the Russian consul-general?"

"This," exclaimed Mademoiselle Tsernikoff. "Five years ago Count Nazaroff was the Russian consul-general at Palermo. He had an encounter on a lonely country road with a bandit known as '*Il Terrore*,' whose real name was Giuseppe Biani. The man escaped at the time, but he was soon after killed while resisting an attempt made to capture him by a squad of *carabinieri* sent into the mountains for that purpose. It was not generally known that Count Nazaroff accompanied the detachment."

"If you know Sicily," continued Mademoiselle Tsernikoff, "you know the

vendetta. On the one hand, you have Giuseppe Biani, the elder, shot to death at the instigation of Count Nazaroff. On the other, you have Count Nazaroff shot to death from the house of which Giuseppe Biani, the younger, had charge. The inference is obvious. Shortly after the Sicilian episode, Count Nazaroff was transferred to New York. If any suspicion of threatened danger to him ever existed in his mind or in his friends' minds, it was doubtless lulled to sleep by the long inaction of the bandit's family. The vendetta may seem to sleep, too; but it never dies. Probably the Sicilian Bianis believed that vengeance might safely be left to the dead man's eldest son, and namesake, in America. Perhaps Giuseppe the younger, Americanized into Joseph Bean, had become so imbued with American ideas of law and order that he shrank from acting the part of the filial Nemesis.

"At last, the impatient younger brother comes to this country to nerve Giuseppe's arm to the deed, perhaps with a warning as to his own fate, if he longer hesitates. Then follows the shooting, not done in the open, but planned with subtle Latin cunning to throw the blame upon an innocent Russian—Paul Verisoff. But the accidental presence of a stranger in the apartment renders that precaution unnecessary. Giuseppe perceives that it will be unwise to push his selected victim forward when chance had so kindly and circumstantially substituted another.

"Still, when he discovers that you know of the Russian's presence, he helps to throw suspicion on him. Then, having provided two possible vicarious victims, he quietly effaces himself from the scene. It is wonderful! It is devilish! My God!" she suddenly exclaimed; "Count Nazaroff was shot on the seventeenth of December—the anniversary of the death of *Il Terrore*! Now, now, can you doubt that you have only to find Biani to arrest the real assassin?"

She paused, breathless after her long and rapid speech, her bosom heaving, her cheeks flushed with excitement, her

eyes flashing with exultation. If this was acting, it certainly was far better, far more convincing, than is usually seen upon the stage. The girl made a handsome picture as she stood before us, and I longed for a great bunch of roses to lay at her feet. She deserved them, whether her words were true or false. It was a distinct damper, an almost brutal let-down, to hear the cool, calm comment of the other half of her audience.

"Your story is most interesting," said the apparently unmoved Fenway; "and if you have not been misinformed—"

"Misinformed? *Cielò!* It is the truth! I know I am the source of the information!" she hotly interrupted, indignant tears springing to her eyes.

"Circumstances appear to have weaved a very pretty case against Mr. Bean. In the absence of John Doe, or in the presence of any real knowledge in regard to him, the evidence would be almost overwhelming."

"Doe! Doe! Doe! Always John Doe!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Tsernikoff. "What has he to do with it? A chance stranger—the accidental victim of circumstances. What can it matter who or what he is? And you—you who profess to be working for him—would you disregard this so splendid clue leading to another?"

"Not at all," replied Fenway; "you entirely mistake me. Do not doubt that I shall follow up every suggestion that you have thrown out."

"Oh, good, good!" cried the girl. "But waste no time! Time is so precious! The day for the trial will soon be here; and we must have everything ready to clear him then."

"I shall waste no time, be assured," Fenway declared; "but it may not be possible to assemble all the facts in so short a space. We may have to fight for more time."

"But the encounter between *Il Terrore* and Count Nazaroff, the latter's complaint, the sending forth the squad of *carabinieri*, and the killing of the man they had gone to arrest, must all be matters of record in Sicily. You can easily verify my story. Where is the flaw in it?"

"Just here," said Fenway. "Taking an unprejudiced view of the affair, it might quite as plausibly be urged that John Doe may have taken advantage of the presence of one of the Bianis in the Davenport to cover his plot to kill the count, as that Giuseppe should have used equal cunning to involve Verisoff. The coincidence that Biani should have been the superintendent of the Davenport is not greater than that John Doe, a man with a maimed forefinger, should have happened into the building at that particular moment. What you have told us to-night, while opening up many valuable lines of inquiry, has so far only accentuated the difficulties of clearing my client."

"But that is your hope, your intention!" Mademoiselle Tsernikoff insisted eagerly.

"My hope, certainly; my intention, if the facts justify it," was all that Fenway would admit.

"Then I must leave you with everything all up in the air," sighed the girl. "But I know that I have helped you, and that you will realize it more and more, the farther you go on; and that you will come to me for more help. But remember my—no not my condition, but my trust in your discretion. John Doe must never hear of Telka Tsernikoff. Good night." And in a moment Fenway and I were alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

"What do you make of her?" I asked of Fenway as he came back from the elevator after taking leave of our visitor.

"What do you?" he retorted.

"Oh, I have had so many impressions that I hardly know where I stand," I replied. "At first I thought that she was playing a deep game, just as you did; but it is hard to doubt her sincerity."

"Then why do so?" Fenway asked. "Why balk at an added dash of mystery, when it may, in the end, serve to clarify the now muddled compound of fact and conjecture? I find myself in

this affair continually compelled to modify my usual method of procedure in many particulars. Why not? The spice of variety imparts an interesting flavor to the work.

"A man should be proud of his achievements rather than of the means by which he accomplishes them. In other words, the method should always be subordinate to the man. After all, it is I who have done this and that; and if the means which I have heretofore employed are inadequate to enable me to do the other thing which presents itself, I must, to justify my belief in myself, cast them aside and work out a new line of conduct. Now, this Telka Tsernikoff, as she calls herself, intrudes her personality into the affair. Does it not appear quite in keeping with what has already happened, that our first offer of assistance should come to us in just this sort of mysterious way?"

"I suppose it does," I admitted; "but I cannot see that it makes it any more satisfactory on that account. Are you going to act upon the assumption that our pretty Russian friend is telling the truth?"

"I am forced to do so," Fenway declared, "until I have proved her story to be false. Some of it must be true. There is no reason to doubt, for instance, the substantial accuracy, at least, of her account of Nazaroff's adventures with the bandit in Sicily; and we know that Joseph Bean is actually Giuseppe Biani, of Palermo. Unless my knowledge of human nature is all astray, the girl is absolutely sincere. I am prepared to be disappointed, but I do not expect to be."

"Do you think it possible that Bean, or Biani, could have shot the consul-general?" I asked.

"Undoubtedly," replied Fenway. "It is clear enough that he had the opportunity. We have now been informed that he had a motive."

"But so had Doe the opportunity," I objected; "while his silence suggests a hidden motive."

"But does not furnish one," said Fenway.

"And then he was trying to get away—down the fire-escape," I persisted.

"He was *on* the fire-escape," Fenway corrected me. "He could not have escaped in that way, and a glance into the yard would have convinced him of it."

"Then you accept his explanation that he was simply trying to see if the ladder reached to the ground? It was a most unusual proceeding."

"The whole case is most unusual," Fenway asserted. "That is the most fascinating thing about it."

"But all this time you are persistently ignoring what seems to me to be the most damning piece of evidence against Doe," I went on. "How do you get around the missing forefinger?"

"We have only the unsupported testimony of the consul-general as to that," was Fenway's astonishing answer.

"And not given under oath either," I added sarcastically.

"Precisely," assented Fenway, ignoring my tone.

"But what object would he have?"

"I don't know, I can't ask him. He's dead. Your mood is altogether too hypercritical to-night. Next thing you will probably be urging that it was Doe who procured Dmetrovitch's business cards and placed them in the letter-boxes at the Davenport, and then forgot to put me on the track of Verisoff."

"He has put me on the track," I said disgustedly, "this very evening—through his agent, Telka Tsernikoff. Can't you see the motive for her pretended desire that she remain unknown to your precious client?"

"Thank you, old man!" Fenway said, with a sudden change of tone. "This little discussion was just the tonic I needed after our interview with our fascinating visitor. Now I think I have all the facts, assertions, assumptions and conjectures properly assorted, classified and labeled in my mind. You are right, Mademoiselle Tsernikoff is a deceitful, double-dealing, mischief-making little plotter, who is simply—"

"I don't think that necessarily follows," I said hotly, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, as the picture of the

earnest, eager, impetuous girl rose up before my mind's eye.

"Walford, you are really delightful," said Fenway, with a hearty laugh. "Now go to bed, and see if you can't recover your sense of humor by to-morrow."

If I had recovered my sense of humor by the morrow it had to serve for both of us for some time. Fenway began at once in the most serious manner to run down the leads opened up in his interview with Mademoiselle Tsernikoff.

In whichever direction he turned, he obtained confirmation of her statements and inferences. Inquiries—in his assumed personality of Gustav Haberman, the German labor reporter, among the Russian residents of the city—revealed that Paul Verisoff was known, by name at least, to many of them, although few had encountered him here, and none had associated with him. Two or three referred to him as a journeyman working for a compatriot. They recognized the name Dmetrovitch as being on the sign of the little cellar shop, but had never seen or heard of its owner.

Verisoff had consorted only with a small coterie of his fellow countrymen, who kept very much to themselves. It was evidently a case of birds of a feather flocking together—birds of a white feather, Fenway suggested, since they had all vanished from the city after the death of Count Nazarovff.

The idea that any of these men, apostles of peace, and holding literally to Count Tolstoi's doctrine of non-resistance, could have had any part in the assassination of the Russian consul-general was scouted by all to whom Fenway suggested it, more especially as Count Nazarovff was known as a great admirer of Tolstoi, although he did not follow him in his most advanced opinions.

The further Fenway looked the more convinced he became that Verisoff, as Mademoiselle Tsernikoff had said of Mr. Miller, could be eliminated as a factor in the murder. There yet remained, however, his presence in the Davenport

on the morning of the shooting to be accounted for, and the solving of the riddle of his possible association with Giuseppe Biani.

Bean himself had disappeared as completely as Verisoff, but Emmanuele Biani was still in New York. To a man named Morello, a retired policeman, of Italian parentage, was assigned the task of gaining the confidence of the recently arrived Sicilian. The latter accounted for his English name by saying that he had taken that used by his brother, the former superintendent of the Davenport, who was then in Chicago. He did not, however, so he stated, know the present occupation or address of Giuseppe, sending all his letters to the General Delivery in that city. An agent of Fenway's in Chicago was immediately commissioned to watch the applicants for mail at the post-office, but without result.

The date of Emmanuele's landing at Ellis Island, incidentally furnished by Morello, seemed to awaken a train of association in Fenway's mind; and one day he sent me to examine the list of steerage-passengers on the Naples Line steamer on which Biani had crossed, telling me to let him know if I discovered anything suggestive. I puzzled through the long array of strangely spelled names of men, women and children from all parts of Italy and many countries of Eastern Europe, and had nearly reached the end without getting a glimmer of an idea of what I was looking for, when there suddenly flashed before my eyes the name—Paul Verisoff! Fenway did not attempt to hide from me his smile of satisfaction when I reported the discovery of this new connecting-link between Verisoff and the Bianis.

"Now, perhaps, you are in a frame of mind to learn something more," he said. "Examine that carefully," and he tossed me the card bearing Dmetrovitch's name, address and occupation.

I scrutinized it microscopically. "It is a tastefully designed card," I said at last. "Rather foreign-looking, perhaps, as might be expected, and one word is spelled wrong."

"What word is misspelled?" Fenway asked.

"City," I replied. "It is spelled with two t's—citty."

"Foreign is a word of wide application. Can you not narrow the definition?" Fenway asked.

I shook my head. "What do you see in it?"

"In the first place," said Fenway, "the card is of a much better quality and design than one would expect to find advertising a business carried on in an East Side cellar. No such card was found among the papers left in the shop by the vanishing upholsterer. The spelling of the word 'citty' is a purely Latin form, probably——"

"Italian!" I exclaimed.

"Having bored the hole through the millstone for you, how well you can see through it," was Fenway's sarcastic comment. "The whole card is Italian in style. Not only that, the address line is printed from imported type—type cast only in Italy. Examine the cutting of the face. That, however, I only learned when I took the card to an American type-founder. None of the type-salesmen that I then interviewed knew of a shop where such type was used; but the probabilities were soon narrowed down to a dozen or so. One of them was on Sixth Avenue within a half mile of the Davenport. The name of the firm was Magnani Brothers. They had, they told me, printed the card for a man who did not in the least resemble Paul Verisoff, but who was identified at once as the original of this photograph, procured for me by Morello from Emmanuele Biani's mantel-shelf."

I looked at the picture. It bore across its lower half the inscription: "*Vostro fratello amoroso, Joseph Bean.*"

"Bean had the cards printed!" I cried.

Fenway nodded. "He only wanted fifty, but took a hundred when he learned the price would be the same. He paid for the cards in advance, and called for them the following day."

"Of course," I said, "and then he distributed the cards through the letter-

boxes, so that Miller would send for Dmetrovitch! It's dollars to doughnuts that Bean put something on the dining-room chairs to rot them, so that Miller would have to send for the Russian the second time."

"Good boy!" exclaimed Fenway. "Your imagination is working in fine shape to-day. So you think there may be something in Telka Tsernikoff's story after all?"

"I am convinced of it," I declared. "Everything points to Giuseppe Biani as the guilty man—everything but the missing forefinger," I added, with a sudden let-down of my enthusiasm. "How are we going to get around that?"

"It may be necessary to ignore it altogether," said Fenway. "Where there is a conflict of evidence, we must be guided by the preponderance of evidence. This case illustrates the mistake of giving undue emphasis to an isolated incident, or of placing too much weight upon a hasty impression made upon a single brain through the medium of the senses.

"When I was in college, our eminent professor of physics was wont to dwell upon the imperfections of the human eye as a scientific optical instrument, and to declare that no self-respecting instrument-maker would be satisfied to base his reputation upon the construction of a lens subject to so many aberrations and inaccuracies. He qualified his criticisms, however, with the statement that for the variety of uses required of it, and considering the materials available, the eye was perhaps as good a makeshift as could be devised. He warned us, nevertheless, to distrust its evidence, and only to accept it where it was capable of complete verification. The testimony of a single eye, or pair of eyes, he maintained, should never be taken as proving anything."

"You'd better call him as an expert," I suggested.

"I would," Fenway replied, "if he were still living. What remains for us to do is to get first-hand evidence of the Biani vendetta and of the incidents leading up to it. That established,

everything that I have discovered in America indicates that Giuseppe Biani was the murderer of the count. You must go to Sicily. A steamer sails to-morrow. You will not be able to collect the evidence before the time set for the trial; but Doe and I will fight for delay. Don't get nervous; don't let yourself be so hurried as to neglect the least essential detail. Concern yourself only with your own task. Doe and I will take care of matters at this end. It will be well for you to see Mademoiselle Tsernikoff, and to get from her every scrap of information that she can supply to help you."

"I shall go to her at once," I said. "Will you please ask Garvin to pack my steamer-trunk and valise?"

"Don't bother," he said. "I have taken passage for you"—he produced from his pocket the passage-ticket—"and have asked Mademoiselle Tsernikoff to come here this evening. You will have time before dinner to tell Garvin what you wish to take, and he can pack while you and she are having your conference. Here is a list of the things it will be necessary to determine while you are in Sicily. No doubt she will make many helpful suggestions. I shall have to go out as soon as we have dined; but you can tell me the result of your talk when I return." I detected in this arrangement a desire on Fenway's part to assure me of his confidence in me, and so to strengthen my confidence in myself.

Mademoiselle Tsernikoff's face, when I told her of my mission, was a study. Delight was mingled with consternation.

"I am so glad!" she exclaimed. "And yet, for some reasons, I am sorry—sorry that it is necessary, I mean," she added. "I see that it is necessary, and that you are bound to go; and so I am bound to help you—and I shall. And yet, oh, how can I explain? Let me think a minute."

She clasped her hands and sat gazing intently at the opposite wall, occasionally tapping the floor with her toe. At last she turned to me and said:

"Neither you nor your friend has

ever directly declared, and still I have somehow gathered it, that, in agreeing to act for John Doe, Mr. Fenway tacitly, if not formally, accepted the condition of secrecy as to his client's identity; that, having undertaken to work for a client whom he does not know, he would consider himself, in a measure, as violating the terms of his contract in seeking to learn more about that client than the client chose to disclose. Am I right?"

I assured her that she was, and that, moreover, I considered my friend as unduly scrupulous, and as gravely jeopardizing his client's case and his own reputation by his punctilio.

"Oh, but you must not think so!" she cried. "He is right. They both are right. You will see yourself that they are right, perhaps, in time. And tell me," she went on earnestly, "he has, then, maintained the same regard for my incognito as for John Doe's? He has accepted the one as a corollary of the other?"

"That, too," I admitted.

"Good! Oh, good!" she said, in a tone of intense satisfaction. "I never doubted it, and yet it is comforting to be assured of it. Now, listen," she continued, assuming an air of great seriousness. "You are his friend. As such, whatever your opinions in regard to his convictions, you are bound to respect them. So," she went on, "if you should discover, in the course of your inquiries in Sicily, anything that Mr. Fenway has not sought to know, that he has consistently refused to know, you would keep that knowledge to yourself. To do otherwise would be as unfair to your friend as to the man whom he is trying to aid and as to her who is trying to help them both." At this Mademoiselle Tsernikoff turned on me the full force of the electric battery of her eyes, accompanied with a smile of complete confidence.

"Your sophistry is so plausible as to be almost convincing," I acknowledged; "but surely you do not expect me to bind myself to any such compact as you suggest? Whatever I learn, while acting for Mr. Fenway, is at his service."

"But do you not see that you will serve him ill if you tell him what he does not ask to know—does not want to know?" she persisted. "What, I assure you from the bottom of my heart, it would be better for him not to know?"

It was harder to resist the girl's appeal than her logic; and, womanlike, she did not hesitate to support her cause by every resource at her command. Her next resort was to try to win me over by frankly taking me into her confidence.

"I cannot prevent you from finding out a great deal about me that I have been anxious to conceal," she continued; "and so I am going to tell you now all that you are bound to learn. What a pity it is," she suddenly broke off, "that you are not a lawyer; then I could retain you as my counsel, and demand your secrecy on the grounds of its being a privileged communication."

"As a matter of fact," I answered, "I am a lawyer; that is, I am a graduate of a law school, and have been admitted to the bar. But I have never practised," I added, as I saw an eager look spring into her eyes; "and, in any event, I am already retained by Mr. Fenway."

"Not at all," she declared. "He has only engaged you as—as an assistant detective. There is no reason why the two functions should conflict. I *do* engage you as my counsel," she announced, taking from her purse an oddly marked gold coin, and offering it to me. I was at once attracted by the unusual appearance of the gold piece and, numismatics being one of my hobbies, I took the coin in my hand to examine it more closely.

"There!" she cried triumphantly. "You have accepted my retainer, and whatever I tell you, you are bound to keep locked up in the safety-vault of your very hard, cold, iron heart! No! no!" she objected, putting her hands behind her, when I laughingly tried to force the piece upon her. "That is my lucky piece. I have carried it for years. In giving it to you, I entrust my luck, my happiness, to your hands. You must not refuse it."

The whole incident was, of course,

only a trick, a joke; but Mademoiselle Tsernikoff's manner was so earnest behind her assumption of playfulness that I felt decidedly uncomfortable as I twiddled the gold piece in my fingers.

"Now I feel perfectly comfortable in telling you who I am. And if, when I have finished, you still have scruples, why—I am content to leave the decision to Mr. Fenway, because I know what he will say."

And she told me an amazing story.

I listened with absorbed attention to the last word of her narrative, and then I said:

"Why all this need of secrecy? You have told me who you are, what your parentage was, and have explained your interest in seeking to avenge the death of Count Nazaroff; but you have said nothing that associates you in any way with John Doe, or that accounts for your interest in securing his acquittal or in keeping him from the knowledge of your activity in his behalf."

A faint, rather sad, smile flickered about her lips. "No woman with a spark of humanity in her soul would permit a man to suffer the death penalty for a crime of which she knew him to be innocent," the Russian girl declared. "But surely you must see, that with what I have related, as a basis, some chance word, some stray allusion falling upon your ears, might in a flash reveal to you all that it is so essential to conceal. It is to keep such a revelation from Mr. Fenway, to make you a partner in our secret, that I have engaged you as my counsel."

"Very well," I said, as Mademoiselle Tsernikoff rose to go. "Fenway will be at the dock to say good-by to me at half-past nine to-morrow morning. I shall tell him of our conversation tonight, and if you will meet us at the steamer you can learn his decision from his own lips."

The girl was waiting at the gang-plank when Fenway and I appeared, sharp at the hour mentioned.

"My dear young lady," he said, "I see no reason why Mr. Walford's engagement with me should in any way conflict with his acting as your counsel.

You are his first client; and my sincerest hope for your welfare is that you may have no further need of his services than as a receptacle for your confidences."

CHAPTER IX.

Aided as I was by the information given to me by the Russian girl, I made slower progress than I had expected in gathering the evidence that I wanted in Sicily. It was all there, and to be had; but the amount of red tape that I encountered, and the dilatory, if not precisely unfriendly, tactics of the officials with whom I had to deal prolonged my mission exasperatingly. My hardest task was in prevailing upon three of the *carabinieri* who had taken part in the expedition against *Il Terrore* to return with me to America. It was almost as difficult to obtain permission from the government for them to do so.

Every step I took confirmed the story told to me by Mademoiselle Tsernikoff, and established more strongly than before the conviction that Biani was the assassin of the Russian consul-general. I chafed impatiently at the delays that were preventing me returning with the evidence, and making effective use of it.

In the meantime events had marched with menacing swiftness at home. With all my efforts to hurry things in Sicily, and with all Fenway's efforts to delay things in New York, the case came to trial in the criminal part of the Supreme Court long before I was ready to start with my transcripts, affidavits and witnesses.

Fenway cabled to me daily a brief synopsis of the proceedings, and sent me the newspaper accounts by mail, with brief but pointed comments penciled on the margins.

Doe insisted upon conducting his own case. When the court was equally insistent on assigning counsel to him, the prisoner availed himself of the lawyer's services only so far as to ask his advice in matters of court procedure or in the preparation of legal documents. He went through the form of appearing with his hands covered, in order to repeat in the presence of the jury the lit-

tle drama he had enacted in the police court. There were, of course, plenty of witnesses to testify to his missing forefinger if he had been allowed to wear the gloves.

It was evident that Bean had succeeded in eluding the watchful Rogers, for he was not called as a witness. The district attorney, Bowers Benson, informed the reporters that the man was in the West, and that as his presence was not essential, it had not been thought worth while to bring him on. The testimony of the hall-boys who had seen Doe enter the building on the morning of the murder and go up to the vacant apartment with the superintendent; the boy who had shortly followed them into it, for the purpose of calling Bean away to speak to one of the tenants, a Mr. Swarthout, leaving Doe alone in the flat; of Swarthout himself; of the persons who had heard the shot a few moments thereafter, and of the officers and citizens who had rushed in and caught the defendant on the fire-escape, sufficiently established his presence and opportunity.

Then came the damning testimony by Doctor Fletcher, Officers Bergner and Finnegan and several bystanders, of the dying count's description of the hand he had seen holding the pistol, followed by accounts of the prisoner's behavior on the street, in the station-house, and before Magistrate Marlowe—and the case for the people was closed.

Doe cross-examined the witnesses only where there was an apparent conflict of testimony, and then only so far as to bring out the exact facts, especially in regard to his refusal to display his bare hands. He called no witnesses in his own behalf.

In his address to the jury, Doe admitted his presence in the apartment at the time, but demanded that he should be acquitted on the ground of reasonable doubt. In the first place, he claimed that the State had not succeeded in establishing a motive for the crime. He argued that his refusal to tell who he was should not be considered in his disfavor. The law regarded every man as innocent until he was shown to be

guilty, and the burden of proving guilt lay upon the prosecution. So many reasons might be conceived why a man in his position should desire to conceal his identity, if it were possible to do so, that he would not attempt to cite them. The simple wish to protect his reputation or to save the feelings of his family would be sufficient. He urged the jury to disregard whatever had been said about his forefinger, and to put it out of their minds. He claimed that his privilege not to be obliged to testify against himself had been violated; that if he had been permitted to keep his hands covered, it would have been impossible for the jury to know whether his description agreed with that given by Count Nazaroff of his assailant, and that, whatever their suspicion, they would have been compelled to give him the benefit of the doubt. He argued that such concealment was equally compatible with an effort on the part of an innocent person to conceal a purely accidental coincidence, and with the hope of a guilty man to escape identification.

Further, he called attention to the fact that the statement of the victim was entirely unsupported by that of other witnesses, while the death of the count rendered it impossible to test the value of his impressions by cross-examination. He asked the jury to consider the distance of the count from the window, the excitement under which he was laboring, and of the danger of trusting to a statement, not made under oath, of a man speaking under such circumstances.

District Attorney Benson summed up briefly, calling attention to the cumulative, convincing and unchallenged testimony of the witnesses for the State. He designated the prisoner's claim of reasonable doubt as insincere and factitious, in view of the evidence. He referred to the unprovoked assault upon a highly respected official of a foreign government and demanded a conviction.

The court, in charging the jury, favored the prisoner to the extent of saying that the State had not succeeded in establishing a motive, and that the incognito that he had successfully pre-

served was not to be taken as an incriminating circumstance. He added, however, that a motive was not essential where other sufficient evidence existed as to the guilt of an accused person. He said further that, while the law did not require a prisoner to testify against himself, it did not grant him immunity from identification by others through the recognition of his physical appearance and peculiarities. While the murdered man's statement in regard to the appearance of the hand that shot him had not been directly corroborated, neither had it been controverted; and it was within the province of the jury to determine how much weight should be given to it in connection with the other evidence in the case.

It took only one ballot for the jury to decide on their verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree."

The case was tried in record time; and the sensation it created, although intense, soon subsided. The success of the prisoner in concealing his true personality was widely commented on. Fenway's observation to me was to the effect that if it showed the man had few friends, it also seemed to indicate that he had no enemies.

A cryptic utterance of the district attorney to Fenway, after the close of the trial, awakened a perplexing train of surmise.

"I have done the best for you that I could," he declared, so Fenway wrote.

"I don't see how you make that out," Fenway had replied; "you have secured a conviction."

"Yes," answered the district attorney. "What else did you expect, knowing who John Doe really is? I think I deserve your thanks and his, for not bringing it out, since I had a clear case without doing so."

"I wonder how much Benson knows that we do not," was Fenway's only comment.

"Perhaps he was merely throwing a bluff to draw you out," I wrote in my next letter.

"Perhaps," was all that Fenway would permit himself to admit in his reply.

When at last I returned to New York with my Italian witnesses, I was nearly three weeks behind in my knowledge of how events had been progressing. Fenway approved of all that I had done, when he had gone carefully over the documents I had brought and had talked with the Sicilians.

He then told me that Doe had been sentenced to death, but had taken an appeal that acted as a stay of execution, basing it on the exception he took to the admission of the testimony in regard to his maimed forefinger. The point was a weak one, but Doe had prepared so able and ingenious a brief that Judge Varnum of the Supreme Court had granted a certificate of reasonable doubt on the strength of it.

The district attorney had thereupon sent for Fenway, who, while having no official standing in the case, was generally recognized as Doe's representative and adviser, and had expressed his indignation that Fenway should have allowed Doe to take an appeal, after what Mr. Benson continued to term his own "consideration."

"If he does not know who Doe is, I am sure he thinks he knows," Fenway said to me, adding: "Was there ever a more ridiculous situation? However," he continued, "it makes no difference; I have found Bean. The fact that the man who was watching the Chicago post-office discovered nothing, and that a decoy letter addressed to Bean was returned to me through the dead-letter office, convinced me that he was not in the Windy City. Then Morello, on one of his visits to Emmanuele, saw a stamped letter, addressed to 'William H. Vail, St. Louis,' reposing in his host's hat. He offered to buy Biani a drink, and the two went out together. Emmanuele stopped to drop the letter in a letter-box. Morello soon excused himself, wrote me a brief line, took the first train to St. Louis, and placed himself in the post-office, where he could observe the applicants for mail at the general delivery window, R-Z. Before night a man answering to Bean's description, and easily to be recognized from his photograph, claimed the letter.

Morello followed him and found that he was engaged as the manager of a moving-picture show on Olive Street, and that he passed under the name of Frank Lewis.

"Engaging a detective to watch Mr. Lewis, alias Vail, alias Bean, alias Bi-ani, the ex-policeman returned and reported. We can put our hands on the man whenever we want him."

"Well," I said, "my advice is that you nab him as soon as possible. I have an expensive and troublesome bunch of da-goes on my hands, and we don't want them to get into communication with any of their compatriots if we can help it."

"And, in the meantime, Doe is under sentence of death. We must move for a new trial at once," declared Fenway, "without waiting to argue the appeal. By the way," he added, "Doe says that he would like to talk with you."

It was an odd fact that in all the time that had elapsed since the attack upon Count Nazaroff, and in spite of the active part I had taken in Doe's behalf, I had never laid eyes on the man.

"I'll go," I answered Fenway, "as soon as I have seen Telka Tsernikoff."

My interview with that young woman next morning was full of interest to both of us. I had much to tell her and she had much to ask me. When she learned that Doe had asked to see me, she was delighted, but urged upon me the obligation of not referring in any way to her or to her activity in his defense. My belief in the girl, fortified by my absolute corroboration of everything that she had told Fenway, and, in far more detail, me, reconciled me to the condition she imposed.

The moment I saw Doe, and came under the influence of his personality, I was able to understand how, in spite of the cloak of mystery with which he had chosen, or been forced, to envelop himself, he had won over even so hard-headed, fact-governed a man as Fenway. What caused me surprise, however, was the man's personal appearance. His face bore no trace of the disfiguring blotches with which I had always pictured him to myself. His com-

plexion had completely cleared, and he stood revealed as a singularly handsome young man of apparently not more than twenty-seven years.

The feeling evoked in me by my talk with John Doe was that of the man's absolute sincerity. If that seems incompatible with the prisoner's guarded secrecy, I cannot help it. I regarded him as sincere in his declaration of innocence, and as equally sincere in his statement that it was best for him to say nothing further. One thing that especially pleased me was his lack of curiosity as to how I had arrived at my results. He appeared to recognize that he could not consistently demand a candor that he himself withheld. He desired the results only; and those, of course, I gladly gave him.

When I had finished, he said: "Mr. Fenway tells me that you are a lawyer. If I get a new trial, I shall conduct my own defense, as before. I have seen the necessity of being assisted by counsel; and, while I appreciate the efforts and cooperation of Mr. Willowby, the lawyer assigned to me by the court, I prefer this time to exercise my right of choice. You know more about the case than I do myself. Will you help me?"

It was in vain that I pleaded my absolute inexperience, saying that I was only nominally a lawyer, with a mostly forgotten book-knowledge at best. He was politely insistent and begged me to allow him to be the judge of what he needed. I could not deny that I should be of assistance to him, but suggested that I could more effectually be so by prompting a more skilful practitioner.

"Prompt me!" he said; and I accepted.

Mademoiselle Tsernikoff congratulated me when I told her of my second client, and declared that she was sure that I would make such a reputation that I would have many more.

My first motion as Doe's counsel was for a new trial on the score of the newly discovered evidence; and I was successful.

The district attorney opposed the motion with so much energy that Fenway and I were glad that we had not fol-

lowed the plan, that we had at one time considered, of attempting to secure the indictment and trial of Bean. We both felt, and Doe agreed with us, that there would have been but a perfunctory and ineffective prosecution of the Sicilian by Mr. Benson, so firmly convinced was he of the guilt of our client.

When we notified Benson that we knew where Bean was living under an assumed name, and demanded that he should produce the missing witness, he appeared as astonished as he was evidently angry. He assured us that not only should he put Bean on the stand, but various other new witnesses whom we should not be so glad to see.

Benson then began an annoying campaign of delay. Every pretext known to the prosecutor was invoked to prevent the case from coming to trial. Our only consolation was in knowing that Bean had been brought on from St. Louis and was safely locked up in the House of Detention. Then suddenly, when we least expected it, the district attorney announced himself ready, and moved the case for trial.

CHAPTER X.

The reasons for the district attorney's delay, as well as for his impatience to try the case as soon as he was ready, were clear the moment we had a glimpse of his witnesses. They were a foreign-looking group, mostly Russians, and apparently persons of social and political standing. To bring them to America must have cost the city a pretty penny.

It required no clairvoyance on our part to see that the prosecutor had something dangerous up his sleeve for us.

Our first direct intimation of the line to be followed by the district attorney was received through his opening address. But even then he was more guarded than is customary in his statements. He contented himself with saying that he was now prepared to reveal the prisoner's carefully concealed identity, and by so doing to establish a powerful motive for the crime.

The presence of Detective-Sergeant Rogers in the court-room, in frequent conference with the prosecutor and with the foreign witnesses, made me fear that his interview with Telka Tsernik-off had furnished the clue upon which he had been working. This impression was strengthened when, early on the morning of the day that the actual trial was to begin, the girl came hurrying to Fenway and me in our apartment with a subpoena from the district attorney's office.

"What shall I do?" she cried. "They will want me to testify against him! I cannot, will not do it. I will kill myself first. Oh, it is cruel, cruel, cruel!"

Fenway tried to calm the girl, assuring her that no harm could come if she told the exact truth; for, as she herself had said, the truth alone could save John Doe. "If you do not believe that," he added seriously, "both you and he have been deceiving us, and that I do not believe."

"Don't worry," I broke in. "Only my compact with you, not to mention your name to my other client, prevented me from calling you as a witness for the defense. The district attorney has evidently waited until the last moment to see if we proposed to use you. Finding that we did not, and suspecting that it was because you would not be useful to us, he has now determined to put you on the stand himself. Whatever appears unfavorable to Doe in your direct examination can be overcome on the cross-examination, and so prove a boomerang to the State."

"I—I don't know," exclaimed the girl, with renewed signs of mental agitation. "What will you think of me? I—oh, I am afraid, I am very much afraid not."

"Nevertheless," said Fenway in his gravest manner, "you must obey the subpoena." It was with this incident to disturb me, in addition to all my other anxieties, that I listened to Bowers Benson's ominous words.

I soon forgot my uneasiness, which continued only as a sort of subconscious impression, as I observed the surprisingly able way in which my client, still conducting his own case, handled the

witnesses for the State. His cross-examination of those who had testified as to the events of the day of the murder was now directed with cumulative effect to bring out with precision the movements of Joseph Bean on that morning.

The district attorney was exactly following his procedure at the first trial, evidently reserving the testimony of Bean for a last blow of the legal hammer to clinch the evidence that he had already, in his own opinion, driven home.

Thus, Doe was able to show, through the hall-boy who had called the superintendent away to speak to Mr. Swarthout, that Bean and he were then in the dining-room of the apartment, more than fifty feet from the front windows. He showed, through Mr. Swarthout, that the witness' conversation with Bean—a complaint about the heating—had lasted only a few seconds, and that Swarthout had walked down-stairs and out of the building some minutes before the murder.

Doe's cross-examination of Officer Finnegan, who entered the building three or four minutes after the shot was fired, disclosed the fact that, as he went into the Davenport, Bean had appeared from a door leading to the rear stairway and had then joined in the rush upstairs. Finnegan swore that Bean had asked him no questions, but that, saying only "This way! This way!" the superintendent had led the party directly to the vacant flat, and straight along the private hall to the dining-room, without passing through the rooms in the front of the house. Upon finding no one there, Bean had pushed on into the kitchen. The others followed; and Finnegan, looking out of the window, had discovered Doe upon the fire-escape.

"Was the defendant going up or down the fire-escape?" asked Doe.

"He was climbing up," said Finnegan.

The testimony of all those who had accompanied Finnegan corroborated what he said.

The interest of the jurors, as they perceived the intent of these questions—to show the opportunity that the su-

perintendent had had to commit the murder, and his apparent knowledge of it, when no one could be found who had told him anything about it—was apparent in the eager attention they now gave to Bean's direct examination.

The district attorney, after getting the ex-superintendent of the Davenport to tell about the circumstances already brought out, asked him where he had gone after his conversation with Mr. Swarthout.

Bean answered that he had gone down to the boiler-room by the rear stairway to speak to the engineer about Mr. Swarthout's complaint. Hearing the pistol-shot, he had paused and looked out of the back window, and had seen Doe coming down the fire-escape. He had then rushed into the front hall, where he met Finnegan, who informed him that a man had been shot. Instantly suspecting Doe, he had led the way to the back part of the flat.

Doe's cross-examination of Bean was directed at first to weaken the effect of his testimony in regard to his movements after he left Doe in the dining-room of the flat until he met Officer Finnegan in the lower hall. The man was confused when he attempted to account for the time it took him to get to the window on the rear stairway, to explain how he was able to hear the sound of the shot at such a distance, when no one else in that part of the house had heard it, and how he came to associate such a shot in the front of the house with a man almost instantly thereafter seen upon a fire-escape in the rear of the house, about seventy-five feet away.

Doe paused so long at this point as to convey the impression that he was through with the witness, who started to rise from the chair.

"One moment," said Doe. "What is your name?"

"Joseph Bean," replied the witness.

"Where were you born?"

"In Sicily."

"What was your father's name?"

"Giuseppe Biani."

"What was your name when you were in Sicily?"

"The same—Giuseppe Biani."

"What was your father's business?"

"An agriculturist—a farmer."

"Did he have any other employment?"

"Not that I know of."

"Did you never hear of his being a highwayman—a bandit?"

"No, indeed; he was a very quiet, hard-working man—a man of peace."

"Was he ever called by any other name—*Il Terrore*, for instance?"

"Not to my knowledge—perhaps in joke—he was so gentle and inoffensive a man."

"How did he die?"

"Suddenly—of heart failure. I was informed. I was not in Sicily at the time."

"Of heart failure? No doubt; but how induced?"

"I do not know."

"Was it not caused by the effect of a rifle-bullet entering his body?"

"I do not know. I was in America when he died."

"Were you never informed that the circumstances of his death were as described in this clipping from the *Palermo Giornale* of December 18, 18—, which I shall now read to you, translating it into English for the benefit of the jury?"

"Giuseppe Biani, the noted bandit, better known as *Il Terrore*, was killed yesterday by a detachment of the military police, after an exciting chase among the mountains where he had his stronghold. *Il Terrore* had long ago earned his title by his daring attacks upon travelers, either robbing them and then releasing them, or holding them for ransom. His arrest was sought on account of his recent attempted abduction of Mademoiselle Borislov, while driving in a carriage through the mountains, and for offering forcible resistance to her rescue by her godfather, Count Nazaroff, the Russian consul-general here. Mademoiselle Borislov is a daughter of Madame Viviani, the well-known grand-opera singer, who was born in Sicily and who is married to Alexander Borislov, professor of languages in the University of Moscow. Mademoiselle Borislov is here on a visit to her mother's family.

"Were you familiar with the circumstances herein narrated?" asked Doe.

The district attorney here interposed an objection, saying that a newspaper

account of an incident happening in Italy should not be admitted as competent.

"Oh, very well," said Doe. "I merely sought to learn if this witness had knowledge of any such report. However, I have here the official transcript of the complaint against Biani, made by Count Nazaroff, and of the report of the lieutenant who commanded the *carabinieri*. These establish the facts in regard to the death of the elder Biani, and I offer them in evidence and repeat my question. Had you any knowledge that your father met his death in this way?"

"It was unjust—an outrage! My father was innocent!" protested Bean.

"That is merely your opinion, I suppose," said Doe. "You have sworn that you were in America at the time. You could not know, then, whether your father was guilty or not?"

"No; but I knew my father."

"Ah, a wise child, then!" was Doe's comment. "You admit that you had at least a general knowledge of the circumstances herein described?"

"The account is not true, my father was not shot by a *carabiniere*—"

"By whom, then, was he shot—by Count Nazaroff?"

"I object!" roared the district attorney. "The testimony of the witness is not competent on that point."

"True," admitted Doe. "He was in America when his father died. I will withdraw the question."

He then asked Bean a series of questions in regard to the existence of the vendetta in Sicily, seeking to discover if the witness had any knowledge of a conspiracy, or was concerned in one, on the part of his family to avenge themselves upon Count Nazaroff for the death of the elder Biani. Owing to the objections of the district attorney, he was able to elicit little information of value, and where the witness was permitted to answer, Doe encountered vigorous denials. The witness declared himself unable to recognize two of his former townsmen who were present in the court-room.

Doe then suddenly switched off to

the arrival of Bean's brother, Emmanuele Biani, in America. From the witness' admissions he showed that Emmanuele had changed his name to Bean immediately on landing; that within a month thereafter, Joseph Bean had applied for and obtained the superintendency of the Davenport Apartments, almost directly opposite the house where Count Nazaroff lived, at a lower salary than he had been receiving; that he had held the post only two months when the count was shot, and that within a month thereafter he had resigned and gone out West, changing his name to Lewis at the time, and receiving letters under the name of Vail. Bean denied that his movements, as so established, had been influenced by anything that his brother had said to him.

At this point, Doe abruptly asked the witness if he knew a Russian named Paul Verisoff, sometimes known as Alexis Dmetrovitch.

Bean glibly retold the story he had related to Fenway in regard to Dmetrovitch's presence in the Davenport the day before the murder of the count and of seeing him in the crowd immediately after the assassination. He declared that he had no knowledge that the man's name was Verisoff, if such was the case.

"You met your brother Emmanuele when he arrived at Ellis Island?" asked Doe.

"Yes," answered Bean; giving, in reply to further questions, the name of the steamer and the date of its arrival.

"Did you see among the passengers this man Dmetrovitch or Verisoff?"

"No."

"Was he on board the steamer?"

"I don't know."

"I desire at this point," said Doe, "to submit a sworn copy of the passenger-list as one of the exhibits in this case, to show that a man named Paul Verisoff was a fellow passenger in the steerage with Emmanuele Biani, and that they occupied adjoining berths."

In spite of the district attorney's objection that the matter was irrelevant, the court allowed the list to be received and marked for identification.

"Have you ever seen this card or one exactly like it?" asked Doe, giving one of Dmetrovitch's business-cards to the witness.

"Yes," answered Bean. "Cards like this were dropped into the letter-boxes of the tenants of the Davenport. I saw one or two of them afterward."

"Did you have them printed and drop them in the boxes?" suddenly asked Doe.

"I? Certainly not!" answered Bean, paling a little.

"If Carlo Magnani, a printer, is present, will he please stand up," said Doe, facing the spectators.

A slight, dark-skinned, dark-haired man arose and said:

"That is my name and business."

Bean's agitation was apparent. He shifted his eyes from the cross-questioner to the printer and, after a little hesitation, denied that he had ever seen Magnani or had ever had any transactions with him.

When Doe at last let the witness go it was evident that the general feeling was that, if the defendant could establish the facts that he had failed to get Bean to admit, he would at least have shown that there was an active plot on foot to kill the consul-general, and so perhaps would be able to secure his own acquittal on the grounds of reasonable doubt.

The district attorney contented himself with asking only one question on redirect examination.

"Is either of your forefingers missing at the second joint?"

A look of relief swept over Bean's features as, with a broad smile that showed his gleaming white teeth beneath his wisp of black mustache, he held up his two hands by way of answer.

Every finger was complete!

CHAPTER XI.

This significant bit of pantomime came at the end of the second day of the trial, and an adjournment was immediately taken. The effect of it seemed to me to discount all the elab-

orate preparation by Doe for the introduction of the defense upon which he was relying to secure his acquittal. On top of our elaborate circumstantial construction of a possible vendetta, in which the son of *Il Terrore* might have been the active agent, Bean's simple raising of his hands seemed to bar the way to further advance in this direction.

Doe, however, was not in the least cast down by the incident. He had, he declared, expected it, and was prepared to use it to his own advantage.

When the court opened next morning, he came in as fresh and confident as if he had been taking a brisk breather in the open, instead of a guarded walk across the bridge of sighs from the Tombs, and took his seat beside me at the counsel table.

The first words of the prosecutor, as he called "Telka Tsernikoff to the stand," apparently conveyed no meaning to Doe, one way or the other. I judged, as I glanced sharply at his face, that he neither recognized the name nor the import of the testimony which the holder of it might be prepared to give. My attention was then entirely given to the figure of the girl, who, closely veiled, and with reluctant and almost faltering steps, advanced to the witness-chair.

"Remove your veil," said the district attorney.

I did not dare to look at Doe, as the witness obeyed the order and revealed her beautiful features, pale as if in death, with dark circles beneath her burning, brilliant eyes; but, as I sat close to my client and leading counsel, I could almost feel the shudder that ran through his frame and the steel-like rigidity that his muscles instantly assumed as he controlled himself by a violent and determined effort. As I turned, as if to address some question to him relative to a paper that I held in my hand, I saw that his face had gone as pale as hers; but in no other way did he outwardly manifest the emotions that I suspected, and soon knew, were seething within him. He gazed upon the witness with an expression as blank as if she were a total stranger, while

she took the oath to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God."

"I have called you," said the district attorney solemnly, "by the name under which you have been known in America. Remembering the oath which you have just taken, what is your real name?"

The girl gave a half-glance, as if of appeal, in my direction, and then, turning her eyes full upon the prosecutor, answered:

"Giuliana Lucrezia Borislov."

A thrill of surprise ran through the court-room. Every one leaned forward so as not to miss a word of the testimony. I was sorry that Fenway was not present. He had, however, gone out early, leaving a note for me to say he should probably be busy all day, and unable to be in court.

"You are the daughter of the late Professor Borislov, of the University of Moscow, and of his wife, known on the stage as Madame Viviani?" continued the prosecutor.

"I am."

"Were you in court yesterday?"

"I was."

"And heard the testimony?"

"Yes."

"Are you the person described in the newspaper clipping read by the defendant, recounting the capture of Mademoiselle Borislov by a Sicilian bandit named Giuseppe Biani and known as *Il Terrore*?"

"I am."

"Count Nazarov rescued you in the manner therein set forth?"

"He did."

"What were your feelings toward him, in consequence of his action in saving you?"

"I was grateful to him."

"You had known him before?"

"All my life."

"And how had you previously regarded him?"

"With love, affection, respect, admiration. Next to my father and mother I looked up to him as my best and nearest friend."

"And all these feelings were natural-

ly intensified by his brave action in risking his life to release you from the Sicilian brigands?"

"Yes; oh, yes!"

"You loved him more than any other man in the world?"

"I did not say that."

"What did you say?"

"That next to my father and mother I cherished a greater affection for him than for any one else."

"Ah, then there was, perhaps, some one whom you loved even more than your father and your mother?"

The witness flushed deeply as the lawyer put this pointed question to her, and looked down, visibly embarrassed. In words that were barely above a whisper, she murmured:

"Yes."

"A man?"

"Yes."

"Your fiancé?"

"I object!" thundered out the defendant, in the capacity of his own counsel. It seemed as if his pent-up indignation had burst through the barriers of self-restraint which he had imposed upon himself in an irresistible explosion. He continued:

"The learned district attorney's line of questioning is irrelevant, immaterial and impertinent."

"I withdraw the question," said the district attorney. Then, turning to the witness, he asked: "Are you engaged to be married?"

"I don't know," was the baffling reply.

"Have you ever been engaged to be married?"

"Objected to as incompetent and irrelevant," interposed Doe.

The district attorney, again without waiting for the court's ruling, withdrew the question and changed the direction of his inquiry.

"Were you acquainted with any other member of Count Nazaroff's family?"

"Yes."

"With all of them?"

"No."

"With which other members or member of Count Nazaroff's family were you acquainted?"

"His—his son."

"You saw him very often?"

"At times, yes."

"That is, when you were in the same place, you saw him frequently?"

"Yes."

"In what places did you see a great deal of him?"

"In Moscow, in St. Petersburg, in Hongkong."

"When did you see him in Hongkong?"

"A year ago last spring."

"Was he in business there, or merely traveling?"

"He was attached to the Russian consulate."

"Had he been there long?"

"For several years, I believe."

"Could he speak English?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Very well?"

"Perfectly. His mother was half-English and he had been educated by English tutors."

"What were his special duties in Hongkong?"

"Something to do with the consular court, so I understood."

"He was familiar with legal proceedings, then—something of an expert in court procedure?"

"I—I don't know. I suppose so."

"What were you doing in Hongkong?"

"Visiting. I went there with my father, who left me with friends while he went to Hankow to pursue certain investigations in regard to the Chinese language."

"How long were you in Hongkong?"

"About three months."

"And, while there, you saw the count's son very often?"

"Yes."

"You left Hongkong in what month?"

"June."

"When did the count's son leave Hongkong?"

"In the same month."

"On the same steamer?"

"Yes."

"With you and your father?"

"Yes."

"And you saw him often then and thereafter?"

"Yes."

"In Moscow and St. Petersburg?"

"Yes."

"Did the count's son remain in the employ of the Russian government?"

"No, he resigned when he left Hong-kong."

"To return with you to Russia?"

"And returned to Russia."

"Did he ever propose marriage to you?"

"Objected to as entirely irrelevant to the issue," interposed Doe, rising to his feet.

"It is most important as establishing the relations of the witness to the count and his family," argued the district attorney; "and unless the witness claims that to answer would tend to incriminate or degrade her——"

"The witness has made no such claim," declared the court; "and until she does so, the suggestion of the district attorney is uncalled for. The question is allowed."

"Exception," said Doe.

"The witness will answer," said the judge. "The stenographer will read the question."

Mademoiselle Borislov listened with burning cheeks, as the district attorney's query was repeated, and then, in a firm tone, she answered:

"Yes."

"Did you accept him?" the prosecutor persisted.

"Conditionally."

"Have those conditions been fulfilled?"

"I don't know. I think not."

"And that was what you meant when you said that you did not know whether or not you were engaged to be married?"

"Yes."

"What were the conditions that you imposed upon your lover before you would agree to marry him?"

Doe entered another objection, which was sustained by the court; and the prosecutor switched his train of questions on another track.

"You have said that you knew the

count intimately. You knew, or had reason to believe, that he was a rich man?"

"Yes."

"You say that you have known the count all your life. How long has it been, to your knowledge, since he made his home with his wife and family?"

"Twenty years."

"As a matter of fact, was not the count virtually, if not legally, separated from his wife?"

"I—I believe so."

"Was it not a matter of common report in Russia that the count had entered the consular service in order to afford an excuse for not living with the countess?"

"I don't know. Russia is a large country."

"Did the count's children live with him or with their mother?"

"With their mother."

"From your intimate acquaintance with the count and his son, were you able to know if they held any communication with each other during all the years that the count had been separated from his wife and that the children had been living with their mother?"

"Only from what they told me."

"Did what they say agree upon this point?"

"Yes."

"Were you familiar with the terms of the count's will?"

"Not until it was published in the Russian papers after the count's death."

"I submit an attested copy of the count's will," said the district attorney, handing it to the stenographer to be marked for identification. Then addressing the witness, he said:

"Please read the document. You will see that the count's son came into possession of all the vast estates of his father, upon the latter's death; and that, after providing, from his personal estate, for his wife's dower and for allowances for his two daughters, the bulk of the remainder was devised to you. Is that right?"

"Yes," said the girl, looking up from her perusal of the will.

"When did you last see the count's son in Russia?"

"About thirteen months ago."

"Can you give the exact date?"

"August 30."

"Was he leaving Russia at the time?"

"Yes."

"Did he tell you where he was going?"

"Yes, on a hunting trip to Africa."

"That was what he generally gave out as the object of his journey?"

"Yes."

"How long did he expect to be away on his hunting trip?"

"Several months."

"Three or four months, or ten or twelve months?"

"Five or six months, perhaps longer."

"It is reported in the papers that nothing has been heard of the count's son since the latter part of last September, and it is feared that he has died in the jungle. Have you received any word from him or had any communication with him since then?"

"No."

"When did you last receive any communication from him?"

"Early in October, last year."

"Where was he then?"

"In Africa."

"What was the date of the letter?"

"September 24."

"Have you heard from him since?"

"No."

"Do you believe that he is dead?"

"No."

"Do you know that he is alive?"

"Yes."

"What is the name of the count's son?"

"Ivan Nicolaevitch Nazarovoff."

"Look at the defendant, who has refused to tell his own name. John Doe, stand up!"

Doe arose and unflinchingly faced the witness.

"Do you recognize him as any one you have ever seen before?"

"Yes," came faintly from the girl's lips.

"What is his name?" impressively asked the district attorney.

The witness gave an appealing glance to me, to the prosecutor, to the judge. Our solemn faces gave her no comfort. The stillness of the court-room was oppressive. The turning of a leaf of a reporter's note-book, as he waited for her answer, grated harshly upon the ear. Rising impulsively to her feet and stretching out her hands to the prisoner as if imploring his forgiveness, in a voice freighted with love, entreaty and despair, she uttered the one word:

"Ivan!" then tottered and fell forward upon her face.

CHAPTER XII.

The defendant did not need the heavy hand of the court officer who sat near him to keep him from leaping to the side of Mademoiselle Borislov. Controlling himself with a splendid effort, the prisoner stood apparently the one unmoved spectator of the dramatic scene that had just been enacted.

As soon as I perceived that he had succeeded in mastering his emotions, I rushed forward to assist the ready hands of the court attendants who were raising the unconscious girl to bear her into the judge's private room. Quick as I was, Fenway was before me. I had not seen him enter the court, but there he was. By his side was Madame Michaelovitch, and, assured that Mademoiselle Borislov would be looked after by those who were devoted to her interests, despite the blow she had dealt to our case, I requested Fenway to wait for me at the Davenport, and then returned to the counsels' table.

Ivan had resumed his seat at the judge's command for order; and the buzz and bustle incident to the unexpected dénouement of the Russian girl's testimony subsided as she was taken from the court-room.

The cause of my client looked hopeless enough at this juncture. No one, least of all I, had further reason for wonder at his persistence in refusing to declare who he was.

All the effect of my painstakingly gathered and precisely fitted together

evidence against Biani had been nullified by a single word.

Even granting that the jury would accept the fact that motive and opportunity had been absolutely proved in the case of Biani, it would count for nothing. In their view, motive and opportunity would appear to have been equally present in the case of young Nazarov; and his missing forefinger, together with his efforts to conceal the injury, would infallibly mark him in their eyes as the real assassin.

As if by an earthquake, the ground had been swept from under my feet; and my only thought was to fight for time. Desperate as the situation appeared, I never wavered in my fidelity to my client nor for one instant contemplated leaving him to his fate.

Addressing the court as soon as I had regained my place, and without consulting my principal, I asked for an instant adjournment. I urged that it was absolutely impossible to place the witness on the stand again that day, and that it would greatly jeopardize the prisoner's case if the prosecution were allowed to proceed with other witnesses before we were able to counteract the effect of her direct testimony by cross-examination.

What, if anything, I should be able to bring out, I did not have the least idea, but my plea proved effective, and an adjournment was taken until the next morning.

Assuring my client that I would see him shortly in the Tombs, I paused in the court-room only long enough to make a short affidavit, charging Giuseppe and Emmanuele Biani with conspiracy to commit murder, and to see the warrants issued for the arrest of the two brothers. I was determined, whatever fate might be in store for my client, that the Sicilians should not go free.

Then, hurrying to the Davenport, where Mademoiselle Borislov had been living since the beginning of the trial, I was met by Fenway in the hall. He told me that while he and Madame Michaelovitch had been arranging for the comfort of the girl in her apartment, Rogers had suddenly appeared with Doctor Carlton Fletcher, a trained nurse

shortly following them. Mademoiselle Borislov was still suffering severely from nervous shock, aggravated by a blow upon the forehead, where she had struck the railing when she fell.

The doctor had ordered perfect quiet and that no one but the nurse should hold any communication with his patient. No exception was made even in the case of Madame Michaelovitch.

For the present, at all events, Giuliana was practically a prisoner; and while we could not doubt that she would wish to see us both as soon as she was able to see any one, it was extremely doubtful if she would be able to get word to us, or that the opportunity would be afforded us to get word to her, so long as it might be the desire of the district attorney and Rogers to keep her secluded. In the meantime, there was nothing for us to do but to accept the situation, and to formulate our plans for the morrow. This could best be done in consultation with the defendant; and together we hastened to him, jumping into an electric hansom as we passed the Waldorf.

The interview with our client was hardly what might be called satisfactory. The assurance, both Fenway and I gave him, that we believed in him and in his innocence scarcely roused him from the lethargic condition into which he had lapsed after his successful effort to control his emotions in the court-room. He refused to concede, even to us, that he was indeed Ivan Nazarov.

"I shall neither admit nor deny any identification of me that may be made," he declared. "The case stands to-day precisely where it did when the present trial began. To secure my acquittal it is necessary to convict the actual offender. We all three know who he is. To obtain the proof of it is the task that Mr. Fenway has undertaken to perform. If he can do it, I shall go free, no matter who I am. If he cannot, I shall be condemned again; and I could have expected no other fate in the absence of any such testimony as that given to-day."

"The point, then, immediately to be settled," I now ventured to say, "is

whether we shall ask for further postponement, pending Mademoiselle Borislov's recovery, or shall submit to Benson's going ahead with the examination of his other witnesses."

"By all means let the trial be expedited," replied our client. "The testimony of the other witnesses will make it unnecessary for the district attorney to call Mademoiselle Borislov again, and I shall certainly not do so. The question of my guilt or innocence can only be answered when Mr. Fenway can prove to the satisfaction of the jury that Count Nazarov was shot by a man whose right forefinger was *not* missing. Can he do it?"

"Yes!" said Fenway quietly.

"How?" exclaimed both of his hearers, almost simultaneously, after the briefest pause to find our breath and to recover from our surprise at his astonishing answer, made in a tone of absolute conviction.

"By assuming, with the assistance of Walford, entire charge of the defense from now on," was his baffling reply. "The trite proverb has it that the man who acts as his own counsel has a fool for a client. Your conduct of your case has so far abundantly disproved the old saw by a modern instance; but the turn that affairs have taken to-day has placed you in a position where you cannot proceed to the best, or indeed to any advantage. There is too much at stake to justify you in attempting to go on. There are not only your life and the happiness of Mademoiselle Borislov to be considered; but, if you will pardon me for referring to it, my reputation, in which my life and happiness, in default of a worthier object, are bound up.

"Leave everything in our hands. Do not even seek to know in advance what course we shall pursue. I think that I am entitled to this little personal triumph; besides, I must have full scope to act according to my best judgment at each instant without referring my action to the judgment of another, especially one whose emotions are so powerfully and so intricately engaged as yours are. Do you agree?"

"It seems to me that I must agree,"

declared our client, "since you leave me no alternative. My own reticence justifies yours, and I am at the end of my resources."

"What do you know?" I asked Fenway, as we came out of the Tombs, and turned north on Centre Street. "You must have discovered something interesting to-day."

"I have," he said simply; "but wait until we get back home and can thresh the matter out at our leisure and undisturbed. Then we must have a rehearsal and another rehearsal and a dress-rehearsal of the scene to be enacted in court, when it comes our turn to introduce testimony. If you do the trick right, we can at least reestablish the element of reasonable doubt that will keep the jury from convicting Doe, or Nazarov, or whatever he may be. That, I am afraid, is the utmost we can hope for at present, in view of to-day's developments. Doe will have to wait for his complete vindication until we can convict the Bianis of the crime on their own trial.

"I don't know why the prisoner came to America in the secret, stealthy manner that he did, nor what he was doing in the house opposite that of the count on the day of the murder; but to permit myself to suspect, at this point of the proceedings, that my client is a murderer, would be to acknowledge that my years of study of human nature have taught me nothing."

I felt sincerely sorry for my friend. He was, I knew, talking to me for the purpose of convincing himself that he was right in trusting to his impressions rather than to his much vaunted "logical processes." As for myself, I did not dare to dwell upon the possibilities opened up by Mademoiselle Borislov's words when on the witness-stand.

I took a little courage, however, when, later in the evening, I went over with Fenway the new evidence that he had dug up by his persistent tracing down of one disappointing clue after another. But my heart sank again when I understood how much depended upon the presentation of it in my unpractised hands.

The following day was a field-day for the prosecution. It was clear that the putting of Mademoiselle Borislov on the stand had been merely for the moral effect that her testimony would produce upon the minds of the jury. There were witnesses in plenty to swear that John Doe was indeed Ivan Nicolaevitch Nazaroff, the count's only son, and to establish all the facts that the district attorney had dragged from the tortured girl for the sake of the climax he had prepared.

My feeling of relief, when, with the arrival of the hour for adjournment, the district attorney announced that the case for the prosecution was all in, and that he had no more witnesses to call, was, however, offset by the realization of the ordeal that awaited me the next morning.

It was so entirely novel an experience for me that, if it had not been for the intensely personal interest I had in the cause for which I was fighting, I could not have attempted it, and if it had not been for Fenway's careful coaching and for his presence by my side to encourage me, I could not have carried it on.

We had, between us, prepared the brief opening address I made to the jury. The gist of it was contained in the closing sentence, in which I stated that I was prepared to convince them of the innocence of the defendant by proving that another man had carefully conspired with others to commit the crime; that not only was he actuated by a powerful motive and possessed of ample opportunity, but that he exactly answered to the description given of the murderer by the only known eye-witness of the tragedy—its unhappy victim, Count Nazaroff.

It took me but a short time to establish, by means of my Sicilian witnesses, by the two Magnanis, by various members of the Russian colony, by the keeper of the delicatessen-shop under which Verisoff had worked as Dmetrovitch, by the real-estate agent who had rented him the little cellar, by a steerage steward of the steamer on which he had crossed with Emmanuele Biani, and by Fenway's agent Morello, the un-

broken links in the chain of evidence against Giuseppe. The grilling cross-examination of the district attorney, although failing to develop a single flaw in it, took a good deal of time, and it was late in the afternoon before I asked to have the former superintendent of the Davenport brought in from the Tombs, where he had been confined on the conspiracy charge the night before.

The most sensational fact that I had brought out was that Count Nazaroff had accompanied the detachment of *carabinieri*, and had, with his own hand, fired the shot that had fatally wounded the brigand *Il Terrore*, when he had been brought to bay.

Now, while waiting for Giuseppe, I took up the revolver that had been found on the floor by the window of the apartment immediately after the shooting. It was one of the people's exhibits. The weapon was of English make, a "Fosbery automatic."

Recalling to the stand the sergeant of *carabinieri* who had been with the detachment sent after *Il Terrore*, and handing him the revolver, I asked him if he had ever seen one like it before.

He replied "yes," that it was exactly like one in his own possession—one that he had taken from the brigand. At this, he took from his pocket a duplicate of the pistol. He further stated that when he took the weapon from the dying Biani, the latter had jerked the companion piece from his belt and thrown it over the cliff, near the edge of which he had fallen, exclaiming:

"*Per vendetta!*"

Asked what difference, if any, he saw in the two revolvers, he said that the one found in the Davenport had a broken stock, which had been carefully mended and strengthened, and that the mechanism also gave evidence of having been broken and repaired. One of the other *carabinieri* corroborated his statement in regard to the sergeant's taking the revolver from *Il Terrore* and as to the bandit's action and words on that occasion.

At this point a stir behind me and a nod from Fenway apprised me that Giuseppe Biani was being brought into

the crowded court-room. The crucial moment had arrived. Without turning around, I called to the stand Doctor Severance, one of the internes of the Post-Graduate Hospital. He carried under his arm a record-book of cases treated at the hospital. After the usual preliminary questions, I asked him:

"Have you in the volume before you any record of Joseph Bean as an out-door patient of the hospital?"

"Yes. He came to the hospital for treatment on December 11, last year, and returned four times at intervals of two or three days."

"What was the nature of his injury or disease?"

"A felon."

"Where located?"

"On the forefinger, between the first and second joints."

"Did you personally attend him?"

"I did."

"Would you recognize him if you should see him again?"

"I should."

"How recently have you seen him to recognize him?"

"I see him now."

"Bean, stand up," I said. "Is that the man?" I asked the surgeon.

"He is."

"What was the nature of your treatment?"

"The first day, I applied a poultice. The second day, I lanced the felon. On his fourth visit, the evening of December 16, his finger had so far recovered that I discharged him as cured, giving him, however, a rubber cot to wear, so as to protect the wound."

"Have you brought a similar cot to court with you?"

"Yes," replied the surgeon, producing from his pocket a brown rubber finger-piece.

"Will you place it upon my forefinger precisely as you adjusted it to the finger of your patient, Joseph Bean?"

I stepped up to the witness-stand and held up my right forefinger. The doctor slipped the brown cot in place. It came exactly to the second joint. Holding my finger aloft, I returned to the counsel-table, where I had replaced the

revolver, took it in my left hand, and stepped back among the spectators.

"How far from you should you judge I am?" I asked.

"About forty feet."

"And how far from the jury?"

"About the same distance."

Transferring the revolver to my right hand, I continued: "If I had an unhealed wound on my forefinger under this cot, and wished to shoot you where you sit, I should not attempt to pull the trigger with my forefinger, but with my second finger, holding the revolver thus, with the forefinger extended along the barrel." As I spoke, I suited the action to the word, and pointed the weapon at the witness.

"You yourself have placed a cot upon my forefinger covering it to the second joint. You know that it is there. Can you at that distance, cognizant as you are of the fact, actually see that part of my finger."

"I cannot."

"What is the impression conveyed to your senses, as I so point the revolver at you, in regard to my forefinger?"

"That it is missing at the second joint."

"Objection!" shouted the district attorney, jumping to his feet; "I move that the answer be stricken out."

I smiled complacently. It mattered nothing to me or to the prisoner what the judge's ruling might be. The effect I desired had been made upon the jury. The answer of the surgeon, whether allowed to stand or not, simply voiced their own thoughts. The illusion was startling, convincing.

The gasp of amazement that went up from the spectators was assurance to me that I had scored the point for which Fenway and I had so earnestly planned. Not the least surprised person in the room was the defendant himself.

The district attorney was still standing awaiting the judge's ruling, when Rogers handed him a slip of paper on which he had hastily scribbled a couple of words.

Without pressing the objection, the futility of which he evidently appreciated, the prosecutor said: "I with-

draw the objection," and asked the witness:

"On which hand of your patient Bean was the finger which you lanced?"

"The left hand," was the disconcerting reply.

Benson looked at the jury with a smile of vicarious triumph. But I was not unprepared for such alertness on the part of the prosecution.

"The learned district attorney is too impatient," I protested. "It is customary, I believe, to wait for the direct examination to be concluded before beginning reply."

Then, without heeding his perfunctory attempt at apology and explanation, I asked the surgeon:

"Doctor Severance, from your examination of the hands of Bean, or Biani, were you able to form any judgment as to whether he was a right or left-handed man?"

"I was," replied the witness; "not only by observation, but from his own admission, as noted in the record. He was left-handed."

"Doctor Severance is your witness," I said to Benson, with overemphasized politeness.

I had scored again.

But the battle was not over. The district attorney was not to be caught napping a second time. Taking the rubber cot from the table, he placed it upon his left forefinger. Then he reached over and grasped the revolver with his left hand, holding it precisely as I had done. Next he stepped back to exactly the same spot where I had stood. Pointing the weapon at the witness, he said:

"As I stand here, holding this revolver in my left hand, and directing the muzzle toward your heart, what is the impression made upon your sense of vision in regard to my left forefinger?"

"None at all," replied the doctor; "the entire finger is invisible. It is concealed by the barrel."

With a glance at the jury to satisfy himself that he had produced the same effect upon them, the prosecutor remarked:

"That is all!"

CHAPTER XIII.

The immediate adjournment of the court for the day, after this stinging blow to our case, seemed to give it the force of a "knock-out." The efforts of Fenway and myself to ignore the fact that Bean had worn the cot on his left forefinger, while Doe's injured finger was on his right hand, had been nullified by Rogers' alertness and by the effective manner in which Benson had followed up the detective-sergeant's suggestion.

The manner in which Fenway had arrived at his explanation of the way in which the consul-general had received the impression that he had been shot by a man with a missing forefinger was so characteristic as to be worthy of record. Convinced by the "preponderance of evidence" that Count Nazaroff had been shot by Giuseppe Biani, a man with all his fingers, Fenway asked himself: "What could have caused a contrary impression to be made upon the retina of the victim's eye?" Standing before his mirror, he practised holding in many different ways the mate of the revolver consecrated to vengeance by the dying bandit. It appeared to him that if the man using the weapon had grasped the barrel between his first and second fingers—the first two joints of the forefinger on top of the barrel, and the middle finger below it and pressing the trigger—it might have looked to a man standing beneath him and to one side as if part of the finger had been cut off.

Fenway next asked himself: "Why should a man hold a revolver in that awkward fashion?" An answer that suggested itself was that the murderer had received some injury to his forefinger that prevented his holding the pistol in the usual way. An objection to the theory that the weapon had been so held was that the forefinger would block the front sight of the revolver making it impossible to take accurate aim at an object thirty or forty feet distant. However, Fenway thought it worth while to inquire if Bean had been suffering from any injury to his hand about the middle of December. Some

of the employees of the Davenport remembered that Bean had a felon some time in that month, and before the murder. It was, however, upon his left hand, and it had been bound up in a conspicuous white bandage that would have prevented him from holding a revolver in that hand and would, besides, have shown plainly if he had done so.

Fenway could not remember having seen such a bandage on either of Bean's hands, but he did recollect that Bean had a habit of keeping his left hand in his pocket. It was an odd fact that none of the employees of the Davenport could tell if Bean were right or left-handed. None of them knew where Bean had gone to have his finger treated. Doctor Fletcher had not treated it, nor had any other physician in the neighborhood, so far as Fenway could discover by inquiry.

He then called upon several Italian surgeons, but with equally unsatisfactory results. Suddenly, the recollection of Bean's personal delivery of Mr. Miller's letter to the Russian upholsterer came into his mind, together with Bean's explanation of his action. He had gone considerably out of his way that evening for the sake of the forty cents that had been given to him to hire a messenger. Evidently Bean was thrifty. Such a man would be more likely to "work" a hospital for free treatment than to go to a surgeon to whom he would have to pay a fee.

The Post-Graduate Hospital was the nearest one to the Davenport, and inquiries there revealed the facts to which Doctor Severance had testified. It was only when Fenway, wearing the brown cot on his left forefinger, and standing across the room from the mirror, practised again with the revolver, that he perceived the true explanation of how Count Nazaroff had supposed that he had been shot by a man with a part of his forefinger missing. The fact that the injury was on Bean's left forefinger seemed immaterial in consideration of the other fact—that he was left-handed. To Fenway—and to me, when he had told me about it—it simply meant that Count Nazaroff had been

shot before he had arrived at the spot where he had fallen.

Unfortunately, no actual eye-witness of the shooting had been forthcoming. Many had heard the explosion; many had seen the prostrate victim. Naturally, the inference had been that the count was struck down where he was found. Accordingly, I saw that my only hope of saving Doe was by the reintroduction of the element of doubt; by impressing upon the jury, in my summing up, that the count *might* have been so situated at the time the assassin took aim that he could have noticed only the forefinger of a man holding the revolver in his left hand. How far this argument would go, I could not tell; and as matters stood, a verdict that did not entirely clear Doe from all taint of suspicion would satisfy neither him nor Fenway nor me.

Had Doe been able to maintain his incognito, it would have made no difference to him on what grounds he escaped—a disagreement would have served his purpose. He would have disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared; and, in time, the new Count Nazaroff would have returned to Russia from his African hunting trip with some plausible explanation of his long silence and longer absence.

But now, the complete establishment of his identity demanded his complete vindication. As I was gathering up my papers in this preoccupied frame of mind, Fenway slipped a bit of a note, hastily scribbled upon the back of an envelope, into my hand, and instantly was gone from my side. A thrill ran through me as I read the brief message:

Paul Verisoff is sitting by the door.
TELKA.

To this Fenway had added:

Hurry home and wait for us.

There were, then, two persons in the room whose presence was equally unexpected. Glancing up, I saw Fenway join a woman who pointed toward the door, through which both quickly vanished. Without waiting to say a word to the prisoner, I hastened to our apart-

ment, where I found Mademoiselle Borislov already waiting for me. She was attired in the blue skirt and long surtout of her trained nurse, and had tied a green veil over the nurse's hat, which she also wore.

"What is the meaning of this masquerade?" I asked, after my first warm greeting. Mademoiselle permitted a little laugh to ripple over her face as she unpinned the veil and sat down.

"Only that I have made an unexpected ally," she exclaimed. "Miss Marvine is a dear. She was so sweet and sympathetic that, before I knew it, I had told her my story; and then she was all on my side. Love, sympathy, kindness, are the best medicine when one is in trouble; and these she gave me in full measure. The thirty-six hours' rest that I had until this morning was all I needed to place me on my feet again, and then I could not remain indoors a minute longer. I wanted to attend the trial, to see Mr. Fenway, you, Ivan. To enable me to escape from the house without arousing the suspicion of any possible police spies, Miss Marvine lent me her coat and hat and nurse's dress.

"I hurried to the court-room and took a back seat. What a day it has been! What alternations of hope and despair! Yet how glad I am that I was there! It was late in the afternoon when, happening to glance in that direction, I noticed Paul Verisoff among the spectators near the entrance! I could not go to him or to you, so I scratched off a line to Mr. Fenway, and, giving it to the man sitting in front of me, asked him to pass it along. At last it reached one of the court officers, who gave it to your friend, just as the court was adjourned. He immediately came to me, and together we started in pursuit of Verisoff, who was just leaving the room. As soon as we were in the street Mr. Fenway asked me to come here and to see you, while he followed the upholsterer. Surely there must be some significance in the man's unexpected appearance."

"Whatever it means, Fenway will surely discover," I assured her.

At this moment the telephone-bell rang an interruption. It was Fenway, who was calling from Hoboken. He had followed Verisoff there, unwilling to speak to him until he could do so in private. The man was outside the jurisdiction of the court, but was willing to return and to testify, if Mr. Miller would also go on the stand to corroborate Verisoff's explanation of his presence in the Davenport on the morning of the murder. Miller, Fenway had learned from the new superintendent of the Davenport, was at the Ebbitt House in Washington. Unable to get his man on the long-distance telephone, Fenway had decided to go to Washington by the next train, taking Verisoff with him, hoping to see Mr. Miller at midnight, and to bring both men back with him on an early train in the morning.

"Now," said Fenway, "if I meet with no setbacks, the best I can do is to produce the two witnesses in court at three o'clock in the afternoon. Can you fill in the time until we get there? Fight for an adjournment if you must, but avoid it if you can. Our only hope is in keeping things moving, moving, moving! Can you do it? Quick, I must rush for my train."

"Yes," I answered.

There was no reply. Fenway had evidently been obliged to drop the receiver and run. Two hours later I received a telegram from him dropped from the train at Elizabeth. It read:

Anybody but Telka.

F.

I showed it to Mademoiselle Borislov. "You see you are always Telka to us," I remarked.

"Well, have not I helped to keep up the illusion this afternoon?" she said, with a smile. "But after all, I am not Telka; and so you will not be acting contrary to Mr. Fenway's wishes when you begin your cross-examination of Giuliana Borislov." For the girl had told me that which had decided me to disregard the wishes of my client and my friend, and to put her on the stand again.

Surprise and mystification were mani-

fest in the faces of Bowers Benson and Plimpton Rogers next morning when Giuliana Borislov appeared in court—and with me. A slight pallor, that was the only indication of her recent illness, was more than compensated for by the cheerful and confident air with which she took the stand.

As for Doe, whom I had not seen since I abruptly left him the day before, I could only press his hand in token of encouragement as he took his seat beside me. Before I could begin my cross-examination, the district attorney, declaring that he had not completed the direct examination of the witness, demanded that she should complete her identification of the prisoner.

With a smile that brought to her cheeks two dimples, as well as a touch of color, she said, in an entirely composed manner:

"Ivan Nicolaevitch Nazarovff."

"She is your witness," Benson immediately announced, turning to me.

I shall not attempt to give a transcript, from the stenographer's minutes, of the questions and answers by means of which I contrived to present to the jury the story that the girl had told me the night before. Instead, I shall give the tale as she first related it to me. In spite of the frequent interruptions and objections of the prosecutor and of occasional adverse rulings of the court, I managed to get the main outline of it and most of its details, if not on the official record, at least on the mental tablets of the jurymen. Those who desire to read the examination in extenso can satisfy their curiosity by referring to the accounts published in the newspapers on the following day.

CHAPTER XIV.

"My parentage you know," began Mademoiselle Borislov. "Both of my parents are now dead. In their lifetime they were on terms of intimate friendship with Count Nicolas Nazarovff, the victim of the murder. The wife of Count Nazarovff had been an old school friend of my mother's in the French convent where the two girls

were educated. Both were musically ambitious, but Selma Poninski, the Polish-English girl, gave up her career when she was married to Count Nazarovff, almost immediately upon leaving school.

"Isolated from her friends and all society for most of the year on the remote estate of her husband, she watched with jealous eyes the rise to fame of her former comrade. Herself wedded to a man many years her senior, in the choice of whom she had been the last person to be consulted and her wishes the least considered, the love-match made by the Italian singer with the poor but brilliant Russian scholar fanned the flames of jealousy into the white heat of hatred. The climax came when reports reached her ears of the attentions paid to the popular prima donna by Count Nazarovff, whose official duties—he was at that time an under secretary in the foreign ministry, took him to the capital, where Madame Viviani was singing. The countess refused to listen to her husband's explanations, or, at any rate, to believe in them; and he, unwilling on account of his children and his family honor to give public cause for scandal by granting his wife a legal separation, applied for a post abroad under the foreign office, and spent the rest of his life in voluntary exile.

"It is not strange that the count's children, hearing only one side of the story, came to regard their father as a heartless reprobate, who not only had deceived their mother, but had virtually deserted her and them. The count, however, never ceased to care for his family, or to provide with prodigal liberality for their support. He sought, moreover, to promote their welfare in many ways not known to them; and it was through his influence, secretly exerted, that his son Ivan received the appointment that gave him his first start in the diplomatic career toward which his ambition seemed naturally to turn.

"After completing the law course at the university, Ivan was attached to the consulate at Hongkong, where his legal training procured for him an assignment as clerk of the consular court.

He spent several years in that English-speaking settlement, acquiring there a practical knowledge of court procedure and a facility in the use of English, in which he had already attained proficiency at home.

"It was in Hongkong that I first met Ivan Nazaroff. At first I avoided him; and when he persisted in seeking my acquaintance, I told him my reasons plainly. He only made them the pretext of seeing more of me, saying that he would be glad to believe that there were no just grounds for the estrangement between his father and mother.

"How far in the beginning his liking for me may have influenced his desire to clear up the misunderstanding, it is not for me to say; but it made him ready, at least, to listen to me. I told him that his father had been kind to my mother, not only because she was the wife of his friend, but because he believed her to be the friend of his own wife. No one, who really knew my father and mother, could for an instant doubt their entire absorption in and loyalty to each other. When my mother died, three years ago, my father was inconsolable and plunged more deeply than ever into his studies, as if to drown his grief in a Dead Sea of languages.

"I could do little to console him. My resemblance to my mother seemed to act only as a constant reminder of his loss; and although he took me with him to China, he left me in Hongkong while he pursued his philological investigations in the interior.

"I had little difficulty in converting Ivan Nazaroff to my views; but when he asked me to be his wife, I told him that, greatly as I had grown to love him, I could not, in honor to my dead mother, marry him, so long as he remained unreconciled to his father.

"But that was not enough for Ivan. With all the enthusiasm of a new convert, he would hear of nothing but a complete reunion of the family. He announced his intention to return to Russia on that mission; and resigned from the consulate service. My father naturally approved of Ivan's determination and of my conditions, and so we made

the voyage home happily together. If I had any doubts of the success of Ivan's efforts as a mediator, I kept them to myself.

"The event justified my misgivings. The countess not only refused to listen to her son's arguments and pleas, but even forbade him to hold any communication with his father on pain of a complete estrangement from her and his sisters. If he married me, even without a reconciliation with the count, the penalty would be the same. Ivan was distressed beyond measure, but was nevertheless unshaken in his own determination, so he told me, when he reported the outcome of his interview. He had, he said, appeared unwillingly to accept his mother's decision, but had expressed his intention of going to Africa on a hunting trip for big game, where he hoped in solitude to adjust himself to the situation.

"His real intention, as he revealed it to me, was apparently to lose himself in the jungle, to make his way to a west-coast town, and from there, under an assumed name, to sail for America; to make the acquaintance of his father as a stranger, and, after he had gained his confidence, to declare himself and his mission. In his further procedure, he said that he would be largely guided by his father's advice. In any event, he would return and claim from me the fulfilment of my promise.

"The preliminary part of this undertaking was carried out exactly as he had planned. He took leave of me in Moscow, and I daily received letters from him written on his journey, one of them telling me of a narrow escape he had made from a hotel at Alexandria, which caught fire in the night. He made a perilous descent from the window of his room in the upper story, severely injuring his right hand. In this letter"—it was submitted in evidence—"he said that he should never again engage rooms in a hotel without carefully examining the means of escape in case of a similar emergency.

"The last letter that came to me from him was written in a little town near the third cataract and bade me be pa-

tient until he was able to report the successful outcome of his hopes.

"Time passed. Weeks of uncertainty dragged out into months of anxiety. The sudden death of my father, shortly after Ivan's departure, was followed by the terrible news from New York of the murder of the count, his father, by an unknown assailant, with the forefinger missing from the right hand. His pictures, published in the papers, showed a hideous man of about forty, with a short bushy beard, who bore no resemblance to any one I had ever known.

"Anxious to discover, if possible, if the assassin was in any way associated with any of the Terrorist groups, I undertook a quiet investigation. The Republican sympathies of my father were so well known that, even after his death, I had no trouble in mingling with the more outspoken Revolutionists. I could discover nothing on which to base the theory that I had formed. Nothing was said, in the cabled descriptions of the prisoner, of the fact that the injury to his finger was of recent occurrence, and I was looking, of course, for a man so to be identified. I was about to give up my search when, by accident, I became apparently involved with some of my friends in a student outbreak in the university, and was advised to leave the country temporarily to avoid the arrest that had been the ill luck of some of them.

"As the bulk of the fortune that I had inherited from my mother was in English and American securities, it was easy for me to act on their suggestion. Where should I go? I could find but one answer to this self-propounded question in my heart. To my lover! I was alone in the world. To whom else should I flee? But where was he? I had not heard from him in months. I could not picture him as in America without actively interesting himself in the prosecution of his father's murderer. Certainly he would have written to me. I could only conclude that he had never arrived there. He must, then, be still in Africa; and if so, against his will, in captivity, sick, perhaps dead. Even if

he had left that continent, and if disaster had overtaken him on his way, I could only trace him by following the itinerary he had marked out. Convinced on all these points, I turned my face toward Africa.

"If any attempt had been made by the countess to trace her son, I did not hear of it. This is the less strange, since he had represented to her that he might be gone a year, most of the time out of all possibility of communication with home. But to me, his silence seemed intensely ominous.

"The experiences of a lone young woman seeking a lost lover in the African jungle would make an interesting narrative of adventure, but they have no part in my present story. It is enough to state that all my efforts were unsuccessful. The natives whom Ivan had hired as bearers and assistants were strangers. He appeared to have purposely selected men who did not belong to the town from which he made his start, and who would have no occasion to return to it. Nevertheless, I followed the general trend of the course that Ivan had laid out, until I found myself at the seaport where he had expected to take the steamer.

"My arrival aroused considerable surprise in the dull little town, and awakened recollections of other travelers who had unexpectedly appeared from the interior. One of these, I more than half-suspected, might have been Ivan. Some months before, a white man had been brought in by two natives. He was suffering from blood-poisoning, occasioned partly by an injury to his hand, which he carried in a sling, and partly from the bites of a virulent insect that had attacked his face as he was borne through the jungle, and from which the beard he wore had not protected him. He was too ill to give much account of himself, but had said that he was an English botanist named Walker. He had gone directly on board the Antwerp steamer that happened to be in port, and his two attendants had immediately disappeared for parts unknown. I was, accordingly, unable to gather any facts that would

tend to confirm my suspicions, and decided that my best plan would be to keep going on the track that Ivan had said he should follow. The sickness of the supposed Englishman, Walker, if he were really Ivan, might unhappily account for my not having heard from him. I shuddered as I thought that he might have died on the voyage and his body have been buried in the ocean.

"Had he recovered sufficiently to continue his trip, I was able to calculate that he should have reached New York just before or just after his father's death. I nearly went frantic with anxiety as I waited for the next steamer. When it came, I lost no time in hurrying aboard.

"The hardships and worries of my journey had so worn upon me that, scarcely had I gone to my stateroom, before I was down with an attack of malarial fever. The ship's surgeon was skilful and attentive, and I was soon able to be on deck in my chair.

"One day, as he sat beside me, to inquire after my symptoms, he said that he would change my prescription. Thereupon he took from his pocket a little traveling medical-case that was the exact counterpart of one I had seen Ivan purchase for his trip. It was of a peculiar make, and I asked permission to look at it.

"The doctor placed it in my hands, telling me it had been a gift from a passenger from my port to whom he had been of some service a few months ago. It had been, he said, an operative case, not important, but difficult, owing to the nature of the injury.

"My head swam with the rush of thoughts that came into my mind; but summoning all my resolution, I kept an appearance of outward calm. Playing with the morocco case, I asked the surgeon to tell me about his patient and how he had helped him.

"'It was a simple thing,' he said; 'an injury to the hand, aggravated by exposure in the jungle and long neglect. To save the hand it was necessary to amputate the forefinger at the second joint.'

"Like a flash, the description of the

unknown man arrested for the murder of Count Nazarov assumed a concrete image before my mind's eye—and, for the first time in my life, I fainted.

"When I revived, I found myself in my stateroom. It was several hours before I could sufficiently compose my thoughts to reason calmly about the revelation that had just come to me. It never occurred to me for an instant to hold Ivan Nazarov as in the slightest degree responsible for his father's death. It was no such suspicion as that which caused me to faint; but the sudden realization of the terrible predicament in which he must have been placed by some devilish conspiracy or through some equally uncanny and perverse combination of accidental circumstances.

"I knew perfectly well that any such idea was as impossible to his mind as any such act was impossible to his nature.

"Even before he had come to see the count's actions in the light that I had thrown upon them, he had always had a kindly feeling for his father, one in which regret rather than anger predominated. The effect of what I had told him had been to revive the latent spark of affection and to fan it into flame. He had gone to his father with a heart filled with love and longing; and nothing could well have occurred, in the short time that could have elapsed between his arrival in New York and the death of the count, to have turned that feeling to bitter hatred and to have nerved his hand to murder.

"I understood at once, how, having been unjustly accused and arrested, he would have preserved absolute silence as to his own identity. Nothing could be more fatal than for him to have confessed that he was the count's son. What has come out in the course of his trial has amply demonstrated that.

"My one anxiety was to hasten to America and to help him. How could I best do it? The search for the answer to this question occupied my mind by day and kept me awake at night. I decided at last that I must respect his wishes as expressed in his consistent at-

titude throughout all the proceedings of which I had any knowledge; that I must not attempt to communicate with him, or to do anything which would tend to awaken suspicion as to who he was. I must work alone. I must not even let him know that I was in the country and trying to help him, lest, in that case, his affection and anxiety for me should lead him in some way, perhaps unconsciously, to betray himself.

"Alas! it was I, who all unconsciously betrayed him. It was by acting upon the suggestions unwittingly given by me to Mr. Rogers that the police instituted the investigation in Russia that resulted in the disclosure of Ivan's identity."

CHAPTER XV.

Several hours had been occupied by my cross-examination of the witness, but it still lacked an hour of the time when, at the earliest, I could expect the arrival of Fenway, Verisoff and Miller. Just before the court opened in the morning, I had received a telegram from Fenway stating that all three of them had started for New York. This had cheered and encouraged me, but there was still the possibility of accident and delay.

Everything upon which I counted for effectively closing the case for the defense depended upon the time occupied by the district attorney in his redirect examination. He could not discredit his own witness, except inferentially; and to the extent that he succeeded, he would weaken his own case. I feared that he would dismiss her with a few questions, but I hoped he would keep her on the stand until the arrival of the new witnesses.

Just as he began, a bulky envelope with the Western Union imprint was put before me. Hastily opening it, I found a long telegram from Fenway giving me a synopsis of what he had learned from the two men, suggestions for questions to be put to them, and, at the end, the caution: "Keep her talking till we come." Evidently he had met an early edition of the afternoon papers.

I studied the message as best I could, while giving my attention to Benson's interrogations. I soon discovered, however, that the witness was quite able to take care of herself. Then I had an imperative telephone call sent to Doctor Fletcher. All through the day I had hardly dared look at Ivan Nazarov, close beside me though he sat. What his thoughts were I did not know, and I was too busy with my own hard work to afford time to conjecture. He did not once offer to speak to me or to interfere in any way with my conduct of the case, by sign, question or suggestion.

It was just four minutes to three when the prosecutor, evidently deciding that nothing favorable to his side was to be elicited from Mademoiselle Borislov, allowed her to step down from the stand. I had no more questions to put to her, and I felt that I would not strengthen my side by appearing to consider it worth while to pay any regard to Benson's subtle but ineffectual efforts to discredit her.

Accordingly, with the best bluff I could assume, I called out:

"Gordon N. Miller to the stand!"

The clerk repeated the call, which was taken up by two or three of the attendants. Just at the moment that it became apparent that the desired witness was not in the room and that I should have to devise some other means of gaining time, there was a little commotion at the door and Fenway appeared, followed by two strangers.

"Gordon N. Miller to the stand!" I repeated; and the man immediately following Fenway answered:

"Here!" and made his way to the witness-chair.

His testimony was brief and business-like, and was exactly what he had told Fenway during the latter's call to inquire about Dmetrovitch, the upholsterer, the evening of December 20. It laid an excellent foundation for the story of the Russian, for whom, after a few unimportant questions by Benson, he quickly made way.

The story told by Verisoff, in response to my interrogations confirmed

at every point the conspiracy theory that had been built up from evidence of the previous witnesses. It removed the intentions of the Bianis from the realm of doubt and placed them indubitably in the category of fact. Verisoff had left Russia for the reasons described by Mademoiselle Borislov, had crossed in the same steamer with Emmanuele Biani, had confided his story to the Sicilian, both of them having a working knowledge of French, had hired a shop under the name of Dmetrovitch, and had sent his address to his sympathetic shipmate—from whom, he added, he had received no response.

As the evidence stood at this point, the motive and the will of the Bianis to kill the count were definitely established, while the motive and the will of the count's son were only presumptive. This presumption had been greatly weakened by the cross-examination of Mademoiselle Borislov. Although obviously an interested witness, her manner and bearing upon the stand had undoubtedly produced a favorable effect upon the jurors. I knew that life and liberty were assured to the defendant. Even if he were not acquitted, it was at least safe to count upon a disagreement.

But how little would that avail him if I could not clear his good name? The first part of Verisoff's testimony had brought out nothing that had not already been advanced. It was important, but merely as corroborating the testimony of others. It began to assume a dramatic phase when the witness described his feelings upon finding, the last day he worked for Mr. Miller—the day of the shooting—a business-card bearing the name of Dmetrovitch in his customer's apartment.

"I had never had any cards printed," he declared, "and could not understand how one could have found its way into Mr. Miller's card-rack! Having no friends who would be likely to take a secret philanthropic interest in my welfare, I at once began to suspect the hand of a secret enemy—some agent of the Terrorist group in Russia to which I belonged before my conversion to the principles of Lyof Tolstoi.

"For a long time I sat trying to puzzle out the possible nature of the plot against me. My impulse was to leave the building and never to return. My need of money decided me to remain and to finish my job. Twice that morning the superintendent of the building, who had admitted me to the apartment, came in to see how I was getting on with my work. He seemed to take a great interest in it. Both times that Mr. Miller had employed me, Mr. Bean had stopped me in the middle of the day and told me to 'come to-morrow.'

"On this day he was more considerate. He even suggested that I should take the chairs into the front room, where the light was better."

"Did you do so?" I asked.

"I did not," Verisoff replied. "But when he made the suggestion the second time, I began to be vaguely frightened. I hurried so as to get through and to get away, but I was nervous and bungled my work. At last, I could not resist the impulse to go into that front room and to look around. There was nothing there to feed my suspicions, and I looked out into the street from behind the curtains. There was nothing unusual out there. I went back to my work; but twice again my uneasiness got the better of me, and I returned to the front room and looked out of the window.

"As I was about to turn away the third time, I saw a man of about sixty-five years come out of the Marquand apartment-house, diagonally opposite, and start across the street. He wore a fur coat and cap such as are worn by rich men in Russia, and that fact attracted my attention.

"Suddenly I heard a sharp report, as of a pistol; saw the man in the fur coat place his hands upon his abdomen, and stagger forward several paces, looking up toward the apartment across the hall from Mr. Miller's as he did so.

"A little cloud of bluish white smoke drifted past my window, as the man reached the fire-hydrant just beneath me, and clutching at it, sank to the pavement. I stood fascinated, watching the crowd gather, and only when a po-

liceman and several men rushed into the building and up-stairs did I come to my senses and realize my danger.

"Certain that they were coming to arrest me, and that it was for that reason I had been lured to the building, I rushed to the rear of the apartment in a frantic effort to escape, prepared to throw myself from the window rather than to fall into the hands of the authorities.

"I got there just in time to see the arrest of the defendant on the fire-escape. Relieved as I was at the sight, my only thought was to get away as quickly as possible. Returning to the dining-room, I put on my hat and coat, and, as the men went down-stairs with the prisoner, I fell in behind unnoticed. I paused on the outskirts of the crowd for a few moments, my curiosity getting the better of my fears, to watch the confronting of the wounded man and his supposed assassin. But when I heard the former exclaim in Russian: 'The eyes of my son in such a face!' I waited to hear no more.

"When I read in the afternoon paper that it was Count Nazarov who had been shot, my worst fears were confirmed. I believed that his son had planned to have me in the building as a scapegoat. It never occurred to me to associate my almost forgotten Sicilian fellow traveler with the affair. In some way, it seemed to me, the plot had temporarily miscarried, and for the moment I was safe; but I resolved to leave the city at once.

"Waiting only long enough to warn my few friends in the city, I crossed the North River to Hoboken. I had no money to go farther, and thought that I should be as safe there as anywhere. There I remained, only venturing back, late on the night of the day on which Count Nazarov died, to remove my few personal belongings and private papers.

"When this trial began and I read the testimony in the newspapers, I felt it to be my duty to add mine to it; but I was afraid to do so. I feared that my explanation of how I happened to be in Mr. Miller's apartment, if uncorroborated, might not be believed. Now

that he has come forward to substantiate it, I am glad to tell what I know about the murder."

As Verisoff finished and I let the district attorney take him for cross-examination, I saw Fenway frown at me, and then instantly recover his composure. I had taken the serious risk, at this point, of disregarding my friend's telegraphed instructions.

As I had hoped and expected he would, Benson fell into the trap. Paying no attention to the Russian's circumstantial confirmation of the conspiracy theory, he went at once to the vital point of the witness' story.

"You have sworn that you saw Count Nazarov at the moment that he was actually struck by the fatal bullet," said the district attorney. "Describe, as nearly as you can, exactly where he was in reference to the windows of the apartment from which the shot, as has been testified, was fired."

With these words, the prosecutor handed to the witness a diagram of the street, prepared by one of the city engineers, that had already been introduced in evidence. Taking the chart into his hands the witness said:

"Count Nazarov left the house where he lived, which is here, diagonally opposite and to the southeast of the Davenport. He advanced to the curb at a point about ten feet east of the lamp-post in front of the doctor's window, and then started across the street, coming directly toward the doorway of the Davenport. He had just passed the manhole, here indicated, about fifteen feet east of the easterly wall of the Davenport, when I heard the shot and saw him place his hands upon his body. He then staggered forward, running as if to prevent himself from falling prone, until he reached the sidewalk, at the point marked 'fire-hydrant,' directly in front of the window at which I stood, about fifteen feet west of the window from which the shot was fired. Then he fell. There he was lying when I came down into the street."

There was a stir among the jurors, and the district attorney looked troubled. Then he said:

"As a sworn officer of the court, it is my duty to bring the guilty to justice, but only in accordance with the exact facts. I recognize the shrewd diplomacy of the counsel for the defense in forcing me to extract from the witness testimony apparently favorable to his client, and I accept his challenge to the uttermost; and—if the testimony of the witness is corroborated—I stand ready to abide by whatever result it may produce upon the minds of the jury."

Then, pacing off on the court-room floor the relative positions of the murderer and his victim in reference to the jury, who were supposed to be looking from the window occupied at the time by Verisoff, he placed the witness at the spot corresponding to that at which Count Nazaroff had arrived when struck by the assassin's bullet. Standing himself at a point agreeing with that held by the murderer, he drew the brown rubber cot upon his right forefinger, and pointed the revolver at Verisoff.

The witness, on being interrogated, declared that the entire forefinger of the right hand was invisible to him.

Next, transferring the cot to the left forefinger, and holding the revolver in his left hand, he again pointed it at Verisoff, who at once swore he could plainly see the lower half of the forefinger, but that all above the second joint was invisible to him.

"That will do," said the district attorney.

"Has the defense any more witnesses?" asked the court.

"Only one," I replied, and recalled Doctor Carlton Fletcher.

"How long was it after you heard the shot before you arrived at your window and saw Count Nazaroff fall by the hydrant?" I asked.

The doctor took out his watch, looked at it, arose from the witness-chair, stepped down, and walked as far as the railing, paused a moment, looked at his watch again, and returned to the stand.

"About five seconds," he said. "It took me four seconds to get to the window. The count was then about ten feet to the southeast of the hydrant.

It could not have taken him more than one second to cover the distance."

The district attorney failed to weaken the doctor's impressions. If the count had advanced ten feet in the one second after the physician had first seen him, it was clear that he could have been as far as forty or fifty feet from the hydrant at the time he was shot. This would have placed him well to the east of the window in which he saw the hand holding the smoking revolver!

Again I had fortified my own case with one of the State's own witnesses; and Benson's requiring the doctor to reenact his procedure on hearing the pistol-shot, with the distances carefully paced off, and timing him with a stopwatch, only served to confirm the point that I had sought to bring out.

The inference from the physician's testimony, coming on top of all that had preceded it earlier in the day, was so obvious that I resolved on one more bold stroke for my client. Announcing that the case for the defense was closed, I stated to the court that, as the hour was now late, and as the trial had already lasted for several days, I was willing to submit the question of the guilt of the defendant to the jury without summing up, if the district attorney would agree.

Benson seemed a little taken back at the suggestion; but when he consented, I knew it was because he had himself become convinced that Ivan Nazaroff was innocent. The judge, in charging the jury, confined himself entirely to points of law. It was just six o'clock when the twelve men retired for deliberation.

It was less than half an hour later when they filed back into the court-room and the foreman announced the verdict:

"Not guilty!"

POSTSCRIPT.

About a year later, on the night of the day on which Giuseppe Biani paid the penalty of his crime in the electric chair, I sat with Ivan Nazaroff and his wife in the library of their apartment, talking over the strange events that had

brought us into so close an intimacy. Fenway had come in with me, but had been compelled to leave early. He was then busy on a mysterious case of suicide that had recently occurred in the house of Doctor Ransom in East Fifty-second Street.

"A marvelous man!" said my host. "What do I not owe to him? My wife, my life, my good name!"

"Don't forget how much of those blessings you owe to your wife," I exclaimed boldly.

"Nor how much we both owe to Mr. Walford," she added graciously.

"I am not likely to forget any of those who so bravely and blindly helped me," he declared. "But, somehow, the crucial moment to me in the whole affair was when I persuaded Fenway to enlist in my behalf without telling him my name. Dark as my future looked to

me at times afterward, I always felt, deep down in my heart, that he would be able to pull me through. The triumph of acquittal was great, but my own triumph was when I secured his promise to serve me without knowing who I was. That was a battle worth winning!"

"Do you mean to imply," I asked, after pausing a moment in thought, "that, if it had come to a final issue, you would have admitted to him that you were Ivan Nazaroff, the son of the murdered man?"

"Oh, yes," he exclaimed; "for I saw that he was, of all men, the one to find the real murderer."

I positively paled at this confession. "For God's sake, promise me, both of you," I adjured them, "that you will never let him suspect it. It would break his heart."



AFTER THE TIFF

THAT every rose should have its thorn

Is Mother Nature's way,
And hence it is I do not mourn

At finding out to-day
That Daphne, whom I love so much,
For whom there is no match,
For all her soft and tender touch,
Can scratch.

The thing to do is not to moan
Because I've learned the fact,
But let her rosy sweets atone
The slightly feline act.
No man who has the slightest wit
Because the thorn is there
Condemns the rose, but handles it
With care.

Hence, when my rose doth come again
My frown she shall not see.
She'll find me smiling gaily when
Once more she comes to me.
She'll find the love I testify
No bubble is, forlorn,
To perish when 'tis punctured by
A thorn.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

The POWER BEHIND the THRONE

By Hilda Mabie



O you mean that Ike Braman is interested in this railroad proposition?" asked Maria Dorrs-Flathers of her husband, who sat across the round breakfast-table, reading bits of news from the morning paper, as he dallied over his rolls and coffee with Fletcherine leisureliness. Be it said that Sam Flathers had acquired Fletcher principles of mastication long before Mr. Fletcher himself announced his all-cure theory.

Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers did not wait for an answer. Moreover, the husband offered no reply, having learned by past experience the futility of even attempting to break in upon the succession of further questions which would inevitably follow. He, lazily awaiting the next interrogatory sentence, was rewarded immediately.

"I am amazed at his want of perspicacity if it's true! Why, Ike Braman ought to know that the whole constituency of the L. S. and V. Railroad will oppose such a scheme, tooth and nail; and if he loses that backing what earthly chance is there for him to be returned to Congress, I should like to know!"

"Perhaps Ike would rather be a railroad king than serve his country for another term." There was ever a tinge of irony in Samuel Flathers' arguments, a playfulness that was as irritating to Maria as if it were born of the poignancy of greater satire.

"King of a railroad! Do you believe for a moment that Tom Higgins and

Isaac Braman and that set of boy financiers can push through this railroad and make it a success? How absurd! They can't do it."

"I'm not so sure myself that the road will ever materialize, but they can make a lot of talk about it. Tom Higgins is playing to the gallery already, talking about public-service reform. He calls the railroad scheme the 'People's Road,' 'Cheap Rates, Cheap Freights, Quick Service, No Smoke.' They have begun to antagonize their own followers against the L. S. and V. by calling the past and present management pretty names. The Lord knows your father will be raised as it were from the dead. You remember the methods used by John Dorrs when his road was first put through were not altogether pleasing to the public, and the L. S. and V.'s reputation has never been noted for its service to the people."

Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers for the moment gave her husband attention. She seemed amazed at his fund of information. "Just how much do you know about the scheme, Sam, anyway? And if you have heard it discussed at the club why haven't you spoken of it? For heaven's sake, don't you realize how close the thing will come home? Why, if an electric railroad were to be built in competition with the L. S. and V. and it did cut into our road's income, where would you be, Sam Flathers, you and the boys, I should like to know?"

"I don't know much about the scheme, to answer your questions in sequence, my dear, and I have not spoken of it because I knew there was nothing

to be said until their plans materialized into something tangible. As to where the boys and I may be in case the road is put through, that I can't tell. Doubtless Nathan will be in school, but John ought to have a shingle out by that time; and if the Dorrs money fails, it might chance that after all a Flathers could on a pinch go to work. In fact, I think our heir apparent inherits Dorrs habits of industry. For my own part, however, I must confess I should hate to turn my office into a workshop after its years of dedication to a smoking-room."

The woman had not even followed her husband's pleasantry as he wandered on in prophetic vagary. She sat tapping her plate with a spoon, thinking hard, thinking keenly. Finally she looked across at her husband and announced: "Sam, I am going to ask Colonel Braman to a dinner. I shall ask the McArdles, the Gatelys and—Betty Gordon. Then we'll see whether this scheme means fight or not."

"Good Lord, Maria, do you mean that you are going to try to handle this affair, too? You can erect college buildings and run philanthropies, and you have been known to manipulate the church diocese, but for the sake of our social reputation don't try to interfere with politics and government."

In spite of the unwonted brusque manner of speech there was a grain of flattery in her husband's words not to be resisted by this woman of affairs. "My dear, if I can name a bishop and elect him in the year 1904, I have no fear but that I can defeat a Congressman in the year 1906. I am equal to it, never fear!"

"You may be game. But Ike Braman is certainly going to run for Congress again, so I don't see how a dinner will influence the Congressman even if you are going to preside at the festal board."

Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers' thinking was concentrative, conclusive; her woman's intuitive faculty was acutely penetrative and she acted upon her conclusions with swift moves. "I shall use my hospitality in order to show him my hand. If

he really means to force the road I mean to see that the management of the L. S. and V. pushes James Gately. I believe Gately would represent us, and I shall tell them so at the dinner. I shall of course consult with President McArdle beforehand." Consulting in this case meant assertive and compelling advice, as in many another hour of discussion when the controlling stockholder of the L. S. and V. met the president of the road.

"Well, here's to you, Maria! I little dreamed among your other administrative virtues that you were to prove a political boss."

"You needn't jeer, Sam! You'll be just as anxious as General McArdle and the rest of the management after the fight is on. My efforts at present will be to prevent its being 'on.'"

Betty Gordon was her Uncle Sam's one and only perpetual interest. This same Uncle Sam, who had grown into the typical club-man with no special purpose in view because of disinclination as well as matrimonial training—Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers having from the outset held the purse and as it were worn the divided skirts—this same Uncle Sam had found in his sister Elizabeth's daughter, Betty, all the vigor of life that had been his own as a boy, but which had long since been lost to him through creeping ennui, a disease as fatal to the joy of life as creeping paralysis to the activity of the limbs. Betty could do the things that Sam Flathers had loved best to do. "She's not too much of a sport," he would say to his sister, "but she 'plays the game' no matter what it is. She's lithe, she's graceful, she walks and stands like a goddess and not like a colt, she's— Oh, she's all right, Elizabeth, and she never thinks about it, either."

Betty Gordon *was* an outdoor woman. There was no doubt about it. When she came home from college she did not enter society as most girls do, with a big ball. She joined all the out-of-door clubs in the city. Men and women recognized from the date of the first cup which she won, that to find her

"at home" meant that they must join her in the saddle or on snow-shoes, roam with her over the golf-links, or visit with her at the tennis-court. Winter or summer alike, she tramped, rowed, played. "Comradeship" was the most significant word she used among her men friends, and the men themselves never gave the girl's intentions a moment's question. They knew as far as they were concerned she was their running mate, their playfellow, nothing more.

Sometimes her Uncle Sam, watching her from under his queer half-closed lids, would wonder what love would mean to this gallant girl when it should come. Then he would shake his head, light a fresh cigarette, and mutter: "There's nobody half man enough for her. Gad! she ought to be married to one of the old school, a pioneer, a man of deeds!"

"Who's going to take me in to dinner to-night, Uncle Sam? And why has Aunt Maria done me the honor to invite me with these older people? Of course I am particularly delighted. I like to be counted among 'the wise and the gentle.'"

"Who's the serpent, Betty? You'll be the dove in that becoming gown, my dear. Let me see—Gately will look after you; I'm to take care of his wife. I think your aunt asked the attorney and Mrs. Gately for the express purpose of my entertaining the madam. You know that woman actually loves to have me make her blush. My flattery is probably the only successful cosmetic left her. Your aunt expects to manipulate the two politicians. Mrs. McArdle cannot accept. As far as you are concerned, you are merely for ornament; there must always be one good-looking woman at a dinner, it's as important as the champagne and flowers."

"Am I good-looking, Uncle Sam? Sometimes I wonder. No one ever says anything about me, it's about what I can do." And a pleading expression crossed the face of the girl, whose luminous gray eyes and fair texture of flesh were offset and emphasized by

soft, wavy black hair that lay parted upon her forehead.

The man put his two hands—delicate, womanish hands—upon his niece's half-bare shoulders and pushed her from him. "Good-looking? Betty, you're a beauty. Don't tell anybody I said so, but you're the sweetest looking girl I ever knew, and I've known as many as I am days old; a new girl every day."

The dinner had moved, as Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers' dinners were expected to move, faultlessly. Two Japanese butlers were here, there and everywhere, noiselessly serving each guest with that self-effacement which no other servants can approach. The club gossip, which had begun in the spacious hallway, had run through the earlier courses as an accompaniment to the lighter wines, mushroom soup and Florida red snapper. Burgundy and beef are, however, heavier issues; sipping is done away with, and one must use a steel knife. Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers was prepared. Leaning over the array of glassware at the right, she picked up a tiny salt-spoon to toy with, and thrust the question home.

"So you and Tom Higgins are planning to wreck the fortunes of the old L. S. and V. Railroad? You can't do it, Colonel Braman, you can't afford to do it. Can he, General McArdle?"

Isaac Braman had known Maria Dorrs-Flathers ever since he could remember. As a younger man he had helped her with her newsboys' club and later, after entering the political field, he had even talked for her before her slum classes, when she was initiating her men's club on Bleeker Street, Colonel Braman valued her for just what she was—a well-meaning rich woman, whose training on the one hand by a dollar-loving, dollar-getting father, had dulled certain moral impulses, yet whose present delight in making each dollar do its peculiar service in her name had made keen her impulse to do good.

On his part the Congressman had accepted his invitation for the evening purposely. He felt a pleasant duty in meeting his old friend face to face, and

in explaining to her something of the larger outlook which the development of a new railroad was to bring about.

Mr. Gately, who was as yet ignorant of the part he was to play in the political game, was thoroughly aroused to the future possibility of the electrical scheme; that he was even fitted as a rival nominee for Congress had never entered his mind. Yet, as Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers had said that morning to General McArdle: "There was no reason why Gately should not go to Congress." "And if not, why not?" she had reiterated again and again.

General McArdle, president of the L. S. and V. Railroad, had never seen Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers in just such a mood. He told his private secretary at luncheon that he had known men strategic or vindictive, but he had never seen so arrant a combination of diplomacy and aggressiveness before in his life. "And," he added, "if Dorrs money is necessary, we have the whole bank-account."

Yes, Gately was interested, and very soon even Mrs. Gately turned her attention from Mr. Flathers' small talk to Mr. Braman's story. General McArdle waited patiently. He had already heard the tale—and he was in the secret of the Dorrs-Flathers' scheme. Betty leaned across the table and forgot that it was a dinner-party.

Yes, the People's Road was to be a big electric line, running almost parallel to the L. S. and V. Railroad from two to four miles beyond the shore-line. It would stop at small flag-stations every quarter of a mile. A cent a mile would be the cost of carriage, commutation tickets making the cost even less. Freight was to be carried with greater economy than by the steam railroad, and at last the citizen of the country town or isolated farmstead could enjoy the privileges of the city because of this rapid transit and cheap service. And, *Deo volente*, the road was to be built within two years!

After the colonel had told his plans briefly but energetically to the table he turned graciously to his hostess and added: "There will be some talk, Mrs.

Flathers, relative to the L. S. and V. Railroad, but our electric is not going to hurt the traffic of that big corporation. Two roads, like two shops, develop business, and with one an electric road there will not necessarily be competition. Each may be contributory to the other."

Now was Mrs. Flathers' turn to accept conditions or give fight. "Why, Colonel Braman, you're mad, simply mad to stand for such a scheme! We, the road, will fight you to the end."

"Why, how are you going to do it, pray?" asked the surprised and almost amused gentleman, little dreaming of the answer. "We are promised our charter, we already control the right of way on all the farms and across the public domain. How can the railroad kill us?"

Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers drew down the corners of her mouth; her husband smiled as he caught the expression. It was as if John Dorrs were sitting opposite him as in the old days. How many times he had seen similar lines gather around the corner of his father-in-law's mouth!

"I think we shall have to send you, Mr. Gately, to Congress this year. You will represent the constituency. I can't see that Colonel Braman is going to."

The deed was done. Just what the woman had expected to happen at that moment never occurred because something so unexpected did happen.

"Oh, how abominable, Aunt Maria, if you're in earnest!" broke in Betty Gordon. "Don't you listen, Mr. Gately, and don't you think, Colonel Braman, of not returning to Congress," rang out the sentences of girlish command.

Mrs. Flathers had met disaster indeed. She had hoped that her coup d'état would produce immediate surrender from Colonel Braman or immediate defiance. But the girl gave no one an opportunity to speak.

"Why, Aunt Maria, what could the road do to spoil Colonel Braman's chances of going back to Washington?"

There was silence. Even the Japanese men seemed motionless. There was

nothing for Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers to do but turn to Betty Gordon and set forth the very soul of her plans.

"Do? Why, we'll influence every voter who is connected with the railroad to vote against Colonel Braman." And she shook her head with mock severity at the young Congressman. As hostess she must appear cordial and good-natured. "Take the conductors and the brakemen and the engineers—take every single one of them with brass buttons or with oil-cans—they will all lose their places if our road goes to pieces, so they'll vote for the man who will kill Colonel Braman's road."

"But, auntie, you won't threaten the men, you won't bribe them?" The girl was almost white with intensity, and her eyes took upon themselves the glint of her black, sheeny hair.

"Bribe—bribe? I've bribed all my life. It's the only way I've got anything done. When I want a big Sunday-school class I offer rewards of merit, and when I want a packed Sunday-school concert at Easter I give them all potted plants. I shall pay every newsboy in Sunbury a dollar for carrying an anti-Braman torch just as I hand out geraniums on Children's Sunday. You can call it bribery, or you can call it church methods."

Betty's Aunt Maria's absolute abandonment of principle was so thoroughly honest and even ingenuous that there seemed for the moment nothing innocuous in her pride of debasing means to gain her ends. Colonel Braman threw his head back and laughed. The laugh was infectious, and was prolonged until the whole party found themselves moving to the veranda, where they still joked and cheered their hostess for her Walpolian methods.

But to Betty Gordon it was not a laughing matter. Strange, she had never touched this thing before except as it were historically. During her junior year in college her second history thesis, which had received honorable mention, had been a presentation of politics in New York City at the beginning of the last century. Its title, "Clinton, a Pioneer Boss," sprang to

her mind now. Yes, her Aunt Maria belonged to that type.

Betty knew that such conditions still existed in government, but she had not dreamed that she herself was to be in an environment permeated by such a tainted atmosphere; "tainted political atmosphere," that was what she had called it in the thesis. It was two years since she was graduated from history and political science and the other courses in humanity and the arts.

"History 13!" What a big vision of American institutions the professor had given them! At the time she had half-wished she were a man that she might enter the field of politics and progressive law-making. Yet for three years she had been *playing*, giving all her time to invigorating sports while her scholarship and culture, in so far as usefulness was concerned, had been lying fallow. It had been as though the delight of her physical capacity to ride and walk and aim a ball had been sufficient to content her mind and heart.

But now as she stood at one end of the broad veranda where she had wandered away from the other guests, a flood of enthusiasm for an active, forceful life spread over her glowingly. She would use her intelligence for something real in the world; for "civic righteousness" she might have called it if she had stopped to shape her thought into language. Here was a man who stood for certain principles laid down by his party at large, who had served the district with credit during his first Congressional term and who ought, if returned to the national assembly, to be the better fitted for service because of his two years' experience.

Yes, she had made a study of Civil Service Reform while in college; it had not meant much at the time but its principles emphasized themselves upon her at this moment. Here was a case involving service and reward; yet, because this same man had ventured into a business scheme that might encroach upon an older corporation, this same corporation threatened to use its octopus power to crush not only the Congressman's personal ambitions but de-

feat the purpose of the men who were politically behind him.

And her aunt was ready to serve such a campaign of opposition! Her Aunt Maria, the woman who had done more for social reform among the so-called lower classes than any other woman in the city! Life was very intricate. Was it worth while to care? After all, were not golf and snow-shoes the better part?

Just at that moment the young Congressman sauntered away from the group of liqueur-sippers—the coffee and Benedictine had been served the guests while they were yet standing on the veranda. He found Betty out of sight around the great pillars at the west end of the veranda. As he approached he began at once to speak.

"Miss Gordon, I have waited six years to tell you something; may I tell you now?"

The girl was surprised at this immediate personality. As she had seen him coming round the corner her instant instinctive expectation had been that the dinner conversation would be resumed.

"What can it be, Colonel Braman? Six years! Why, I was a little girl six years ago."

"Oh, no, you weren't? You were graduating from the High School with long skirts and your hair in a roll. I remember all about it, you see. I was one of the three judges who decided the prize essay, and as chairman of the committee I had to read and reread your paper with particular care."

"But you weren't at the graduation? You didn't give out the prizes, did you?" Betty could remember the whole scene so vividly, the big crowd in the Opera House, rows upon rows of girl and boy graduates seated upon the stage, and the exciting moment when her name was announced as the winner of the literary prize medal.

"No, the bishop was asked to present the prizes. But I have not told you yet what happened. Your essay was entitled 'Tennyson's Message.' You see I remember even that. And you began it, 'Not Lancelot nor another.' The words caught me at the very outset and

I read eagerly to the end where you quoted the other and first half of the couplet: 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.' Do you know, you interpreted Tennyson for me? You gave me catchwords. I've tried ever since 'to choose the highest' because of your little graduating sermon."

Isaac Braman was the kind of straightforward man whose strong red blood gushes through a boy's heart. As he stood before the girl in the quiet of the moonlight he did not look his three and thirty years. Rather he was a tall, lithe, blond youth with clean-shaven face, honest blue eyes, and smiling mouth. In the old days he might have been a young viking; or in these latter years a college athlete, save for the stoop in the shoulders that reminded one that he was a man of books.

In the nature of every real woman the eternal feminine lies hidden even if it has never been commanded. Coquetry and lightness were not characteristics of Betty Gordon; she was too much in earnest, too full of robust young girlhood. Moreover, but the moment before, this young woman had been full of the courage of life, indignant with her aunt's philosophy, aroused by her own study of past politics, and now, on the instant, she was proud that the young Congressman had followed her into the cool of the evening where shadows fell across the moon-lighted spaces to talk to her of "Tennyson's Message."

It was the moment of a woman's lifetime to say noble, uplifting words. Instead Betty Gordon was just like every other girl and looked up at the big fellow as if he were a schoolboy. Then she asked audaciously:

"If you really wanted to know me, why have you waited these two years since I came back from college?"

And because, after all, this Congressman was but a very simple young man he liked the coquetry of the question better than if the girl had followed the inspiration of the poet. Her demand drew their interests close together; they were alone; the murmur of voices was slight; it was pleasant to be asked why,

and his quick answer: "I have been patient; I wanted you to know all the other men first and get used to their ways of doing things and wanting things," brought with it something the girl had never before experienced, the ecstasy of being possessed! Here was somebody who had been waiting to know her, who had kept her in his mind, who had watched her develop from a girl into a woman, who had bided his time even to be introduced.

There was silence for a moment and then the man went on. "I've seen you again and again at the Country Club and at receptions. To-night's curious disclosures at your aunt's political dinner-party seemed a peculiarly fitting moment for me to meet you and to find you just what I had hoped, a champion. But I have a fear withal. I hate to hurt your aunt, yet I must go on, of course, with my railroad and campaign. Perhaps just as I have found you, because of your close relationship with your uncle's family, it will prove that I have waited six years to say all these things to you and then to say good-by."

Betty stretched out both hands. "No, no, Colonel Braman, you have found a champion and I have found—myself. I shall try to do all I can to overcome Aunt Maria's opposition, but in any event I shall be your—knight. I am glad to know you for the king." Then she added quickly: "We needs must 'choose the highest,' you know."

As he dropped her hands he in turn kept up the spirit of the Round Table by asking: "Just for luck, give me something for a favor; they wore favors in those days of knights and kings."

At that moment Mrs. Gately and Betty's Uncle Sam moved along the flagging below the veranda. The latter, looking up, caught a glimpse of his sweetheart-niece which made him lie awake that night an hour longer than usual; wondering, thinking, building a castle in Spain, a thing Sam Flathers had not done for years.

When Ike Braman boarded the cars at midnight, after a long session with Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers, General McArdle

and Attorney Gately, he opened his thin elephant-skin wallet very carefully and looked into it with stealthy eyes. Yes, he could see the flower that Betty Gordon had worn in her hair.

It was evident to the citizens of Sunbury why the management of the L. S. and V. Railroad had chosen James Gately to run against the regular nominee of the Third Congressional District. The fact that he had pleaded successfully again and again for various corporations against the city ought to secure him a constituency of moneyed men with far-reaching influence. Moreover, his long years of association as attorney for the "Dorrs Road," as the Lake Shore and Victoria was often called, made it almost a conspicuously appropriate choice.

The Gately men aroused themselves with unprecedented enthusiasm. For years the Third District had gone gamely Republican. The one man nominated in the primaries was sure of his place in the national assembly. Some prominent representative citizen had wanted to go and he had been supported by a unanimous party.

Even when Colonel Braman, a more youthful leader than usual, had seen fit to run two years before, conditions were most harmonious. His predecessor had been called to a more lucrative position in the government, and the district had accepted this younger man without a dissenting word. In fact, he had stumped the territory more to get in touch with the people than to drum up votes. It is true that during his term of office he had made no famous speech nor had he served on many very important house-committees, but he had been a force at certain times. Older men prophesied a larger career for him if returned.

Amidst this unwonted excitement in the district, no one perhaps was more enthusiastic over the contest than President McArdle; he was positively elated by the development of affairs. For years he had looked forward to a time when the management of this rich but small road might control a place in

Congress as it controlled matters nearer home in State and municipal government.

Arthur McArdle had grown up in the office of John Dorrs; he was his echo in the days of Sunbury's one great financier, and since the Dorrs mantle of management had fallen upon his shoulders he, with Maria Dorrs-Flathers as advising premier, had developed and carried out the Dorrs' policy. So absolutely necessary was the man to the road and its policy he had literally sacrificed the one and only ambition of his more personal life—that of an active politician. Now he saw a vista of opportunities. Now his heart beat faster with freshening hope.

"You aren't playing your bogey game to-day, Betty; what's the matter?" Her Uncle Sam had watched the girl furtively but continuously since the night of the "railroad dinner" as he liked to call his wife's effort at diplomatic hospitality. He had noticed as they met each day on the links that his niece was unlike her old self; she often sat for a long time on the settees near the teeing-boxes, not watching the game; rather her eyes were far away out and across the lake which stretched along the shores of the Country Club and which took upon itself the oil and smoke of the city, making its waters opalescent in the afternoon sun. Or again she would leave the links and follow up one of the half-dozen tiny creeks—inlets, that crept away from the lake and wandered back through the grassy shallow shores, making, incidentally, charming natural hazards for the game, yet with much larger purpose, perchance, irrigating the adjoining land into an everlasting greenness that gave the landscape a ribboned appearance, ribboned with dark-green satin that ran on and back into the country for miles and miles from the lake shore.

"I don't know, uncle," Betty muttered at first. Then, turning quickly, she added: "Yes, I do, too. I'm out of conceit with this 'simple life' which you and I seem to lead; I thought I loved it, but I don't any more. All the

things I studied at college are coming in upon me, and I'm restless. I want to help! I want to make people *see*! Why, I want to make Aunt Maria different! But of course I can't."

"No, you can't," answered the uncle laconically. "She's the reincarnation of her father Dorrs. You might clip her wings, but the torso is Dorrs' inherited tendency. You'd better not attempt to handle your aunt's principles."

For some time they sat silent, the uncle rolling cigarettes and the niece leveling the tee with her mashie. Presently she asked:

"How much will Aunt Maria really do to influence the vote against Colonel Braman's nomination?"

"Your aunt herself, directly, will do nothing; but she is a woman of resourceful plans. She has already given McArdle carte blanche in regard to money for legitimate campaign purposes. But in a campaign it is often that the details play the most important part; even the question of what popular airs are played by the bands is often very telling. Your aunt thinks of a lot of things; for instance, she is to control all the livery-stables in town during the caucus. Then she has ordered two kinds of candidate buttons, one for men, one for boys. Hartshorn of the school board has promised to see that every schoolboy in the city has a present of one of these buttons."

"Do you mean that Aunt Maria has asked Mary Hartshorn's father to do that?" asked Betty indignantly.

"Yes, certainly, that's just it. Mary went to Europe and studied art with your aunt's money; now your aunt is using Mary's father to distribute buttons, my dear. Buttons! Oh, I can't begin to tell you how cleverly she has planned the whole thing. Gad! your Aunt Maria is a remarkable woman if she did marry me."

"Don't talk like that, Uncle Sam. Oh, I do wish you cared about anybody, anything—politics, education, life! Nothing really matters to you."

"Yes, it does, Betty; I care about you. I can't bear to see you lose the sparkle out of your eyes. Heavens!

I'd be willing to fight a duel with your aunt or attack a Congressman in the public street if I thought either of them could hurt you."

"Uncle Sam, do you think Colonel Braman likes a good many women?" Betty's mind was evidently wandering from her uncle.

"Braman? I never heard of his showing any one attention. Has he been pretending to you that he is a gay Lothario?"

"No, no, I just wondered. I have been trying to think of ways to help him. You see, I suppose it sounds horrible, but I'd like to outwit Aunt Maria; but if Colonel Braman isn't used to women's friendships he might think me—forward."

"Great Heavens, Betty, no one could think you sentimental if that's what you mean by forward. But you can't outwit your aunt; I know that from experience. If you could I would help you for the sheer fun of the thing. But tell me, Betty, has Colonel Braman done anything to give you reason to want to help him?"

"Why, yes, Uncle Sam, he has been to see us once or twice, you know, since the dinner, and then just before he went away to make his stump-speeches he called me up by telephone to ask me about references—historical quotations, you know, and such things. Then, last night, Uncle Sam, there came a box of orchids, with his card, saying that I had brought him success in his speech at Hale's Falls the evening before."

"I see, I see; of course you want to help Ike." And the man as he spoke rose and stood looking down lovingly on his niece. "I don't wonder you want to help— Oh, Betty, Betty, my little girl!" he ejaculated, and then walked quickly away, forgetting his golf-bag in his haste.

Betty caught up with him, trailing both outfits. "Why, Uncle Sam, what's the matter with you? You've said you will help me. Now what can we do to offset that horrid, selfish bribing machine of a railroad?"

"Well, my dear, we cannot stump it, that's out of the question; and you and

I haven't any money to put up against the graft."

Betty walked in silence across the long drive, then she began again: "Of course you know, Uncle Sam, that Mr. Gately and Colonel Braman have agreed to have an open-air debate, 'a challenge,' the papers call it. I'm afraid it will go hard with Colonel Braman because he speaks last, and the crowd will be tired and restless. Last night he had to telephone me about something—"

"Oh, did he?" the uncle interrupted.

"Yes, and his voice sounded very hoarse. I doubt if his voice will reach the great audience."

Betty spoke feelingly, but her uncle did not watch her; he remembered other episodes where the maternal instinct had shown itself for a hero even before the woman recognized that love had found a place within her heart.

"Uncle Sam, you can help me, but you must promise not to tell Aunt Maria."

"Betty, I am a man of discretion if not of wisdom. If I had been a man of great *avoids* there have been times when one might have counted me a *Falstaff*."

"I have overheard a secret, Uncle Sam. I heard Aunt Maria tell Mrs. Gately that at the last moment she was going to send to Mr. Gately that new big megaphone, the one she has given with the phonograph to the boys' club. She was afraid that if she told him about it he would scorn it, but when he is on the platform and sees that big surging mass of spectators before him she thinks he will be thankful to use even a megaphone in order to control his audience."

"Well, my dear, do you want me to buy another one for Braman's use?"

"Certainly not, the novelty would be all worn off. I want you to hide Aunt Maria's so she can't find it, and then at the last moment after Mr. Gately has finished his speech, send the megaphone up to Colonel Braman, who will naturally be thankful to use it to command and interest afresh the already tired congregation of listeners."

Betty's face was so earnest, so eager,

that it seemed almost cruel to her uncle to laugh at her. But the situation struck him as so absurd, as well as wanting in any kind of principle, that he burst into a laugh.

"So you wish me to steal! Gad! you women are a curious lot! My wife acknowledges that she bribes where she pleases, from the Sunday-school to the ballot-box, and my little niece, who wants to make the world better and incidentally to redeem her aunt's loose morals, suggests petty larceny as a means to the end."

"Oh, Uncle Sam, I don't want you to steal for me! What a shocking idea! It'll be a sort of—oh, a sort of joke." The girl looked anxiously up at her uncle, who immediately replied:

"Your Aunt Maria will see no joke in it, and I think Colonel Braman would not like to know the details of your strategic move. If you really care so much that even your ethical judgment becomes illogical, to say the least, we must do something more vital than to 'swipe' megaphones." After waiting a moment, he continued: "Are you very, very sure that you care enough about this matter to force *me* into the active field? I suppose I can help you out if you really need me."

Betty's hand crept into her uncle's as she drew a little nearer him and sighed, as if perplexed.

"I don't know why I seem to care so much about this thing, but I do, Uncle Sam. I want Colonel Braman to win."

That evening there was a new expression on Samuel Flathers' face, an expression of determination about the lower jaw; an intensity about the eyes that had not found expression there for years. In the old days when Samuel Flathers had made love to Maria Dorrs he had been the handsomest man about town and the "Ward McAllister" of fashion. There was no doubt about it, John Dorrs recognized it, and his daughter Maria knew it, too, that the fortune of this Adonis lay in his sculptured face and well-appointed wardrobe. Even his Yale acquisitions consisted more in the line of sheepskin and fraternity pins than even in profes-

sional promise. But Maria Dorrs had fallen in love with him and had won him in spite of her father's opposition. To-night Sam Flathers meant that the actual fact of their love for each other should serve as master of the situation.

"Ri, I have had an opportunity today to grow reminiscent. We lead such a busy life, you at work and I at play, that we seldom if ever speak of the beginning of things, our beginnings, yours and mine."

Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers was sitting in a big leather chair by the table cutting the leaves of a new magazine. September winds had suggested an open fire on the hearth, which lent itself to the Darby and Joan picture which Samuel Flathers was trying to create in his wife's mind. A modern stately library sheathed in carved antique oak, with foreign tapestries and electric sconces, with Oriental rugs and soft billowy chairs and couches—such tout ensemble does not lend itself at once to domesticity; a modern Darby and a latter-day Joan are absolutely impossible in such a room without an open fire, for upon the hearthstone only do we find the relics of the Lares and Penates.

Plain, sharp-faced, dressy woman that she was, Maria Dorrs-Flathers did not suggest even in outline the rather vivacious, attractive girl who, nearly a quarter of a century before, had felt that the whole world centered in this man. She kept on cutting the leaves of her magazine, but she looked up half-pleasantly, half-skeptically, at her husband to discover unwonted earnestness and determination in his face.

"Your experiences of the day must have been pleasant. You look more like yourself than you have for years, Sam," his wife offered as her part of the approaching tête-à-tête.

"I don't think, dear, I've asked a favor of you since we were married." Her husband leaned nearer and put his hand on the arm of her chair. "That was such a very great favor that it has seemed to compass everything since."

The woman dropped her magazine and turned to her husband in astonishment.

"What can you mean? How strangely you are talking! Why should you ask a favor of me, Sam, and why should my marrying you have been granting you a favor when I loved you better than anything in the world?"

This amazing outburst was almost the undoing of the new diplomat.

"Well, the fact is, Maria, I'm all broken up about Betty. She has fallen desperately in love with Ike Braman."

"Our Betty in love with Ike Braman! Good gracious!" ejaculated the woman.

"Yes, but she doesn't know it," answered the husband, and for the moment there was a tinge of dramatic action in his manner. "She thinks she has waked up to her responsibilities, so she has interested herself in this campaign, and, my dear, it is life or death with her to outwit your position in the matter. I think if Braman is defeated it will actually crush the girl."

"Why, I didn't know they even knew each other the night they were at dinner."

"They didn't, as far as I know." Mr. Flathers had resumed his attitude before the fire.

"Do you mean that Ike has had time to push a love-affair in the midst of this Congressional campaign?" queried his wife. Had her husband been watching her he would have seen that her mind was occupied with other thought than that suggested by the rather frivolous question.

"He evidently has had enough leisure to buy orchids," was the rejoinder. The picture of Betty's face in its innocent frankness rose before the uncle and he shut his eyes to intensify the pleasant vision.

"Our Betty in love with Ike Braman! Why, Sam! Well, it's a fine old family. Isaac Braman's mother is the most beautiful woman I have ever known—the most perfect lady!" Maria Dorrs-Flathers added a moment later as the problem loomed up before her: "But it's very complicated."

"It's more than complicated, my dear, it is tragic! Betty's attitude of mind toward you and your 'want of principle,'

as she calls it, is undermining her own morals. She is so lost to righteousness that she's even plotting to steal Gately's megaphone in order to give it to Braman."

This was a stroke which Mr. Flathers had not planned to make. As he dashed it off he realized that it might or might not achieve. He waited. Evidently it made no impression whatsoever upon Betty's aunt. Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers was thinking ahead. Yet looking into the past as well as the future.

Presently she said: "When your sister Elizabeth was in London and left that child to me for a winter I nursed her through malignant diphtheria, in spite of the doctors and the three nurses. I have always felt that I had a peculiar claim on Betty."

"I'm afraid that, after all, the claim is on you." Mr. Flathers spoke with his old-time lazy drawl. "You certainly saved her life once. Evidently it's up to you to sacrifice yourself again if need be." He waited some time and then he added: "What a plucky fight you put up in those old days with that sick child!" That was his last effort. He turned on the ottoman, took the long brass poker and dug away at the glowing embers.

Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers lay back in the big chair and did not speak again for fully ten minutes. At last she rose and went toward the door.

"I shall not come down again to-night. I am going to write letters, and I am tired already." Just as she crossed the threshold she turned. "But, Sam, when you want a thing done don't call it a favor; I am your wife. Good night."

President Arthur McArdle read the special-delivery letter through three times before he moved a muscle. As he swung round in his swivel chair to his private secretary he was white in the face.

"Women are fools," he remarked, and then he added: "Read that," thrusting the engraved note-paper under the very eyes of young Bent.

LAKEBY.

Thursday Evening, September 20, 1906.
GENERAL ARTHUR MCARDLE, President L. S.
and V. R. R.

MY DEAR GENERAL MCARDLE: At present I cannot explain the reasons for the step that I am taking. I think you know me well enough to trust me. I want you and James Gately to call off the out-of-door challenge; we have outgrown the opportunity for "Douglas and Lincoln" debates. The raff might make it very unpleasant for both parties. Cancel the agreement with the caterers who were to serve free coffee and sandwiches to Gately men. The buttons, of course, have been distributed, but I do not care to negotiate for the hacks for the twenty-seventh, and although such money as I have already pledged is yours for influence with the employees of the L. S. and V. R. R., all other plans which you may be about to execute I will ask you to count me out of. I shall hope to justify myself to you and Mr. Gately in the near future, but whether I ever can or not, I am doing my duty.

Believe me, with high regard,

Faithfully yours,

MARIA DORRES-FLATHERS.

"Can you account for it?" asked the private secretary, after he had read it word for word, with increasing interest as he recognized the cause of General McArdle's pallor.

"To begin with, she's a Dorrs. They do as they damn please and call it 'duty.' To end with, she's a woman. What can you expect?"

Young Bent's wife was president of the Social Economics Club of Sunbury. He did not enjoy the general's last remark. Mrs. Bent had educated him to another view-point; it jarred upon his sense of justice to have the older man speak thus of women in general.

It had been a typical autumn day; clear blue sky, yellow falling leaves, rustling winds and the smell of autumn bonfires that indicated the last harvest of a dying summer. Little groups of men hanging about the primaries foretold the issue long before nightfall. When the stars came out and the young hunter's moon hung in the east, gradually the tidings from the outlying districts were delivered at the City Hall. At eight o'clock Colonel Braman's office-boy brought the news to Betty Gordon that the Congressman's renomination

was an assured fact. At ten o'clock, as Betty and her mother were on their way to their bedrooms, they heard the sound of martial music and knew that a band must be marching across the city playing patriotic airs in honor of the tremendous political victory. Then loud shouts went up and prolonged applause, as of many hands and stamping feet, indicative that the successful candidate had made a speech that went straight to the hearts of the motley crowd who were the rank and file of the procession.

It was exactly half-past eleven when Betty, still dressed and with sparkling eyes, tiptoed past her mother's door and crept down-stairs to the telephone. She held a tiny watch in her hand and she lighted a wax taper on the mantel in the hallway. One—two—three—her number!

"Hello! Is that you, Colonel Braman? How good of you to remember to call me up. I want so to congratulate you! Of course I have heard the cheering. Then your office-boy, Tom, came to tell me you had won. Oh, I'm so glad, so glad for you!"

"But I've *not won* yet, Miss Gordon," came to the girl over the wire.

"Not won? Why, what do you mean? Oh, I know. You mean this is but the nomination. But you are sure of the election. The district always goes Republican. We have never sent a Democrat since Michigan was a State."

"I didn't mean that," came over the wire as the second message.

"Well, what do you mean by not being sure?" urged the girl anxiously.

Colonel Braman's voice assumed a new cadence. At least, there was a mingling of humor and tenderness Betty felt, when she thought about it afterward.

"Did you know that your aunt, Mrs. Dorrs-Flathers, has invited you and me to dine at Lakeby again to-morrow night? I sha'n't be sure, Betty, that I have won anything until I see you there under the vines on the veranda. Then you will tell me, won't you?"

Betty's face was radiant.

"Oh, oh, do you mean *that*?"



THE GOVERNMENT AND MISS SILVIA

By
Ada Woodruff Anderson



FROM his seat in the stern of the launch McClellen, the construction engineer for the government, which was building the irrigation dam at the foot of the lake, looked up its still, green-shaded, opal-lighted length. It was a splendid waterway; one of Nature's great reservoirs deep in the heart of the Cascades. The wooded heights and craggy peaks that walled it gathered immensity from their mirrored double beneath, and far up, beyond the tortuous narrows that opened into a second basin, a loftier mountain, white, shining, like an armored sentinel held the gap. He wished the Chief Executive, off there at Washington, could span those three thousand miles and see it all for himself this morning; then he would realize what a prize had been saved.

It was safe; McClellen set his lips with a quick uplift of his square, clean-shaven jaw; his eyes, direct, far-seeing like a soldier's, darkened and kindled under his prominent brows. In the face of fighting land-sharks and lumber corporations his reports had won through. They had secured unblemished to God's own country one of her finest timber and irrigation reserves.

His glance lingered eastward on the unbroken solitudes, but when, after a moment, he turned in the other direction the challenge died in his eyes. There, a little northward still, holding

a level at the mouth of a narrow gorge on that west shore, stood the sole habitation on the lake, Meriwether Lodge. It was not a common settler's clearing, hacked boldly on the landscape; there was no garish blot of paint; the log bungalow so toned into its surroundings that, even at this close range, it took careful scrutiny to trace the low-gabled eaves on their background of cedar and fir boles. It was too bad that the place must go.

Of course the government would make good, still—he knew just how the colonel was going to take it. These old Southerners were always a little sore to begin with. And Miss Silvia—Miss Silvia—— He shook his head and looked away to Chimney Mountain, holding the gap above the upper lake, and he told himself it would be easier to work out the proposition of a grade through those pinnacles than to make the best of this inevitable interview.

His glance fell and met the questioning look of the man who navigated the launch. "Yes, Dave," he said, "run in to the lodge; I want to speak to the colonel."

"I thought likely you'd want to head off the colonel's boat. See her, don't you? She's off there, working down from Box Cañon." Dave held the wheel steady and swung his free arm in the direction of the distant rowboat, the only craft, with the exception of the launch, that ruffled the surface of the lake. "Looks like Miss Silvia row-

ing," he added, and his weather-beaten face crinkled in a smile. "Yes, sir, it is Miss Silvia, alone with the setter."

"Then run in to the landing," McClellen's voice took a dominant note. "The colonel probably is there."

He noticed as the launch drew in that the rise in the lake had already submerged the trunks of the foremost trees; Colonel Meriwether's favorite cedars were dying; two of mighty girth had fallen, and the water, seeping around the boat-house, almost reached the lower step of the balcony. It had been necessary to throw a rustic foot-bridge across the overflow. Clearly this visit had been put off to the limit. But he would be able to have it out alone with the colonel; he could hurry it through before Miss Silvia reached the lodge.

He stood up. "Wait here, Dave," he said. "I won't keep you fifteen minutes." And before the launch touched the landing, he sprang over the side and started quickly up to the bridge.

But Colonel Meriwether was not at home. The Japanese house-boy, who had watched the arrival of the launch from the balcony, explained with elaborate apologies that the colonel had taken his cousin, or friend, a very great man who had arrived at the lodge yesterday, on a two days' fishing trip up Box Cañon. But Miss Silvia, who had rowed them up to the mouth of the creek this morning, would be back very soon. His excellency might see her if he would trouble to look up the lake.

There was, then, no help for it; he must say, what he had come to say, to her. He sank down into the chair which the boy ran to pull forward for him. The balcony was a pleasant waiting-place. A Virginia creeper lined the roof and dropped airy tendrils; rustic boxes and Indian baskets, with sometimes a gay toy canoe, hung between the pillars. They were planted with geraniums, sweet peas or mignonette, and moved almost perpetually, at the slightest stir of wind, like swinging censers. The colonel called them Silvia's garden.

Finally the rower dipped a last tell-

ing stroke and shipped her oars. McClellen rose and stood waiting at the top of the steps, and seeing him, she waved her hand, calling a soft "Good morning."

Dave, who was waiting on the end of the landing, caught the prow and reached for the coiled painter, and the setter, already out, picked up McClellen's trail, and running over the bridge, bounded up the steps with excited barks of recognition. Then he was down and racing back to express his delight to his mistress. She laughed and, pausing to answer some remark of Dave's, picked up a sweater from the seat in the stern and, tucking it under her arm, came up to the crossing.

She had the unhampered, swinging step of a woman who lives out-of-doors, but there was about her a certain inherited grace; a fineness that was as much a part of her as the warm Kentucky blood that flushed through her tan. The sleeves of her sailor blouse were rolled back from brown, firm, yet beautifully molded forearms, and the open collar exposed charming lines of chin and throat and a triangle of swelling chest. She turned up the brim of her white canvas hat, after a way she had when she came into the shade, and the hair roughened and clung to her moist forehead in little red-gold rings. But her lashes were black and her eyes had the color of the lake on cool gray days. They always reminded McClellen of the lake; he never was certain what they would do. Sometimes they were all sparkle, invitation, and sometimes, close on a calm, like the lake he had seen them break in sudden storm. Her whole face seemed to have caught expression from the lake; a ripple, a flash of light when she spoke; a shifting of shades when she listened.

The setter sprang up the steps before her, leaping to set a familiar paw on McClellen's shoulder. She laughed again, a soft note, keyed to the sound of water on a moving keel. "Jacques doesn't forget old friends," she said.

"You mean I do, Miss Silvia." He did not offer his hand, but he put the dog down and gave her a straight look,

knitting his brows. "I've been busy. I couldn't get away. I'm going up now to trace the source of that last creek at the head of the upper lake; I want to satisfy myself whether it's supplied by a perpetual snow-field or not. And I just ran in for a few minutes to speak to the colonel."

A shadow crossed her face. "Father has gone fishing up Box Cañon, but of course Hanafusa told you." She moved by McClellen and, seating herself on a bench in a jog of the balcony, looked off over the railing. "There are no trout rising in the lake now," she added; "the dam has shut them out."

"I know that. It's one of the things I'm sorry for, Miss Silvia; but we hope to remedy it in time. I wish I could say as much about these trees."

He stood for a moment, frowning down at the fallen cedars, then he lifted his chair, brought it forward a little, and seating himself turned his direct look again on her face. She had a very nice profile; one caught the upward sweep of the lashes; the hint of a tilt in the finely chiseled nose; the proud almost obstinate lift of the chin.

"I'm in a position hard to explain," he began. "I'm sorry I missed your father. But, if I find it practicable, I shall push on from the source of that stream to Gold Creek, and strike Lake Keechelus to have a look at the construction going on there. I may not be able to make another visit to the lodge for a month or more. You see, Miss Silvia, I can't put it off. I can't hope to make you understand but," he paused, leaning forward in his chair to draw her look, "I must say what I came to say—to you."

There was another brief silence, during which she continued to look out over the lake and he watched her face. Then he straightened himself. "You think a good deal of this place, Miss Silvia, do you not? It has been your home for a long time."

At this she started and turned her face to him. "Yes," she said quickly, "for nearly six years."

"You hardly remember any other home?"

She shook her head. "My first home, in Kentucky, was just a ruin. And after my mother died, when father came West, he left me in a boarding-school. It was the dreariest place; I don't like to think of it, but I was there four years. At the end I was the slimmest, palest girl, with a cough, and when father saw me again he said I frightened him. He brought me straight back with him to his ranch in Washington. But even that wouldn't do for me; I couldn't ride the little pony he had broken for me; the summer heat in the valley was too much for me; so he brought me up here. We lived in a tent while the lodge was building, and we spent whole days on the lake; explored every cañon, stream, the shores around. You can't imagine what that meant to me; it was freedom to a thing caged; freedom and health and my father all at once. Afterward, whenever we went away in the winter to avoid the mountain snows, the lake seemed more beautiful, the air finer, home more satisfying when we came back. Of course I love it. How could I help loving it?"

"I knew it, Miss Silvia, before I asked. No other spot could ever seem as much to you as this place right here in the mouth of this gorge, where the lodge stands. Even for—well—a big consideration—you could hardly bring yourself to give it up."

He paused for a moment, but she was silent. Her lip trembled; a soft flush rose in her cheek, and she turned her face again to the lake.

"I don't wonder," he said. "I don't wonder. I should feel the same way. Why, the first time I stopped here—it was on that warm spring day I started on my cruise through these waterways for the government—I told myself this was the kind of home I wanted; the only kind I could hope to have, spending the best of my life as I must, here on the edge of civilization. I did hope"—his voice quickened and deepened—"I hinged my whole future on it. And I found the finest little lake, tucked away up there like a jewel in a pocket of the Cascades; I've seen it under every lighting; opal at dawn; turquoise at

midday; ruby at sunset; and I believed—it was the sheerest folly—but I believed the one woman I wanted, could forget—sacrifice everything she cared for, just to share things up there—with me.”

His voice broke on the last words, and he rose abruptly and walked to the end of the balcony. Hanafusa came smiling, with a coffee-tray, to the open door. He stopped for an uncertain moment on the threshold, and looked from his mistress to the man who stood with his broad back squared, staring out into the tangles of the gorge; then he put the tray down, noiselessly, on a small table, and retired.

Finally McClellen swung around. He walked with decision, carrying his head high and, looking off to Chimney Mountain, with that defiance of the fighting man again in his face, “Miss Silvia,” he said, and he might have been speaking to one of the laborers down at the dam, “I want you to tell your father that we are taking steps to have these shores cleared of timber to the new water-line; before we are through this lake will be raised seventy-five feet. You understand what that means? It means a little bay in here, filling the mouth of this gorge, and completely wiping out your home.”

She started to her feet. The color flamed and went in her face; her lip trembled but she could not speak; she only stood with her eyes lifted to his face, probing him through and through.

At last he dragged his gaze from the mountain and met the look. “The government stands ready to pay for it,” he said. Then his voice lost its dominant note. “We can’t make restitution for—everything, Miss Silvia, I know. But it’s useless for me to say how sorry I am. You are going to blame me—hate me perhaps—as long as you live. I know how it looks to you. I’ve accepted your father’s hospitality; spent all my idle time here; hunted, fished with you both; had the best year of my life. It’s useless to say now, at the end—”

“Then please don’t say any more.” She had found her voice at last, and the

signals of the storm he had dreaded flashed in her eyes. “It’s worse than useless. I understand. I know—everything. Please go. And I hope—I shall never—see you—again.”

She rocked a little on her feet as he went down the steps; then she sank down on the bench; her hand closed on the edge of the seat in a tight grip. Presently she lifted the other arm to the railing, and dropped her head, hiding her face. Her hat fell off and rolled to the brink of the overflow.

McClellen did not look back, but he halted on the last step, and turned aside to pick up the hat. He stood smoothing it and straightening the wet brim; then he hung it, carefully, smoothing it once more, on the newel-post, and, after another uncertain moment, walked down across the foot-bridge to the waiting launch.

II.

It was not practicable to tramp across to Gold Creek and Lake Keechelus, and the third day found McClellen working back to the mouth of his stream. He was forced continually to leap from ledge to boulder, over chasms cut by the torrent, to avoid the dense undergrowth that followed the watercourse. His rifle hampered him, and the small shoulder-pack, which a man must carry in the wilderness, shifted and pulled at every harder jolt. His muscles stiffened; the cords of his strong neck ached. But presently he came to the top of a cliff where the creek plunged in a cataract and, looking out beyond the lower level, he saw the upper lake. Southeastward, while he halted, a dun cloud trailed up behind a peak, and a gust of wind from it struck the tops of the firs below him. It was as though he stood on the edge of a green, surging sea. The lake roughened; it was whipped into sudden passion by a cross flaw. Somewhere down on the shore a tree fell; a far-off booming signal.

McClellen sat down and worked his way out from the brink of the torrent to an incline of smooth rock and, letting go his hold, slid diagonally across to its

lower edge, which was broken by a dry gully, choked by slabs and boulders that formed a giant stairway in the cliff. He swung without stopping over the first huge step, and gathered himself to drop to the next. At the same instant he caught a glimpse of a woman's skirt below. He could only shout a warning. She shrank back, pressing into the cleft, and he threw himself outward, swerving a little, and found foothold on the table-rock almost in front of her.

He took off his hat and looked at her. "I'm sorry, Miss Silvia," he said. "Of course if I had known you were here, I should have found some other way down."

She moved a little and, leaning still on the tilting wall, turned her eyes from him to the cataract. The cleft was sheltered, but so close to the fall that it was like standing in it midway. It was being in a wonderful shower that never drenched; only chance wisps of spray touched her, though the ledge beside her was wet and all along it dripped the airy umbrellas of maiden-hair. At intervals a rainbow belted the cascade above her; once it stretched, a fairy bridge, almost from her feet. She had not spoken but her whole attitude said plainly: "Then, why don't you go, and let me enjoy this place?"

He swung himself down from the table to a lower shelf. The step was not so great and he was able to turn and, resting his arm on the rock, look up at her across the rim.

"A storm is coming, Miss Silvia," he said. "If the colonel is fishing in the timber he may not have noticed it."

She gave him a swift side glance without turning her head. "Thank you for telling me; but father isn't here," she said.

"Do you mean that you came up here, all the way from the lodge, alone? Then you must try to catch the launch around at the end of the Gold Basin trail. Dave was to bring supplies up to-day, for a packer going in to the mines. He promised to wait until four o'clock for me. There's time to make it"—he looked at his watch—"if you hurry, Miss Silvia."

"Thank you, but I have my boat."

"But you know the lakes. You know the folly of starting out, in a light row-boat, in the face of this mountain storm. It may last until midnight and you need daylight going through the narrows."

The cataract boomed an interlude, then, her answer ready, she turned a little to meet his look. But she saw his head dimly, through a sudden rush of mist. The rainbow shifted so that his hand on the rim of the rock seemed to hold the rim of the arch. She forgot for a moment what she had meant to say.

"If it's so impossible to go around the shore to the landing with me," he added, "I'll stay here. I'll row your boat down. Only—go in the launch."

"I can take care of myself. Your gun is getting wet. And if a storm is coming Dave must be impatient to start."

It was useless. The most he could do was to push on to the launch and have Dave stand by in readiness, at the worst, to take the rowboat in tow. He turned and went quickly down the remaining steps of the bluff, and on along the stream. But, presently, while he picked a crossing over the boulder-choked torrent, he stopped, looking toward the outlet.

The rise in the lakes had flooded the low banks there and dying trees stood deep in the overflow. The mouth of the creek divided in new channels that eddied and seeped through the underbrush. She had brought her boat well up, taking advantage of the backwater in the main current, and McClellan saw that, since she had moored it, one of these inundated trees, a large hemlock, had fallen and, with its top wedged between two firs that crowned a dry knoll, completely blocked the outlet, locking the craft in. It was hardly possible for her to push a way around through the submerged tangle; clearly he must have Dave run across from the landing and take her in.

He swung himself up out of the creek bed, and picked up a faint, little-used trail. The undergrowth in this broad, moist level, close as it was to everlast-

ing snows, was almost tropical. Ferns rose over his head and spread palmlike fronds; devil's-club crowded between giant trunks and flaunted poison-barbed leaves; orchids fringed the thread of path, and in the deeper shadows tiger-lilies glowed like round, watchful, brutish eyes.

No breath of wind penetrated from the lake; the sun hardly filtered in, and after a while, as he pushed through the crowding silence, a strange uneasiness oppressed him; not for himself, he was well used to tramping the jungle, but for this girl, who, hating his presence so much, unwilling to accept any favor from him, chose to risk herself alone in a mountain storm; possibly to a night there at the cataract.

But why did the colonel allow her to make these long journeys without him? There was always danger lurking. What if some beast, a lynx, a cougar, prowling along the watercourse, should chance upon her track? True she had the dog—

He stopped short. Did she have the dog? He could not remember having seen him as he came down the gorge. Jacques had not come to meet him with his noisy welcome; he had not given his mistress the usual warning. Still, the girl and the setter were almost inseparable; she would not have ventured so long a trip without him. Clearly something had happened to the dog; and alone up there she might be, even now, facing—what?

He began to walk back quickly, listening, toward the gorge. Once, twice, he was not sure, but he thought he heard her call. Then suddenly, as he doubled a huge trunk and a break in the timber ahead marked the watercourse, he saw her coming swiftly toward him.

"Jacques," she said, and stopped before him, locking and relocking her hands in evident distress. "Jacques—" Her lips trembled; her shoulders, her whole body shook. "Jacques—is dead. A falling tree—caught him—at the mouth of the creek."

Instantly McClellan understood. The setter must have been busy unearthing

some wild thing, a weasel, a rabbit, there at the roots of the firs on that dry knoll, when the top of the hemlock struck. She had discovered this in trying to find a way around the fallen tree, for her boat.

"I see." His voice vibrated a soft undertone; the distress in her face furrowed his own. "I see. I noticed that hemlock when I came down to the outlet, but I hurried right on to catch Dave and send the launch over for you. There isn't any time to spare, but we can make it"—he looked again at his watch—"if Dave will give me ten minutes' grace."

He began to lead the way back through the forest, and she followed in silence. Her fine spirit was broken; she moved mechanically, with her eyes bent on the thread of brown earth; her step had lost its lightness; sometimes she stumbled. How she had loved that setter! What capacity she had for loving! But, what was there he could say to her? Would she not, when she came to reason, hold him responsible for the catastrophe? Had not the dam, causing the high water, brought down the hemlock?

At last they approached a great log beyond which the path met the broad, beaten track from Gold Basin. He had distanced her a little, and he swung himself up on the barrier and turned, waiting to help her. He set his clogged soles in the bark and reaching took her hands and drew her up beside him.

"Don't make so much of it," he broke out. "I know I can't hope to replace him, but there's a fine young setter down at Yakima; the same nice black and tan; markings almost a duplicate. I think I can get him for you; I'll try my best."

She shook her head. "Jacques—was so bright—so human. He knew more than most men."

"I know that," McClellan admitted gently.

"And father—father—you know how much he thought of Jacques. They hunted whole days together, and at night went over things. They both loved a good, crackling backlog in the

fireplace. Jacques—could yawn—like a tired boy."

"I've seen him," McClellen admitted still more gently. "And he could laugh. I never saw another dog laugh like Jacques. But—I want you to see that setter at Yakima."

He sprang down from the log. At the same moment the whistle of the launch reached them faintly. She started, her foot slipped, and for an instant her body sank trembling against him. His own arm shook, but he put her on her feet and lifted his voice in a great shout. He repeated it with his palm to his mouth. Then he took her hand and ran with her down the broader trail. Presently it met a creek, a larger stream than the one that they had left, flowing clear and deep over a pebbly bed; and the wind, drawing up this watercourse, brought the whistle, a short, final toot, once more.

McClellen answered again, a long, insistent "Hello"; but the breeze carried his big voice backward, up the gorge.

They ran faster then and, in a little while, the trail, skirting the creek, brought them to a small landing, where the backwater from the lake, flushing the outlet between high banks, formed a point enclosing a cove. But the launch was gone.

They pushed through the undergrowth, across the point, to the open lake, and saw the boat, far down, a whiter-heaving streak, struggling southward against the tossing crests. It was useless to shout. They stood a silent interval, in the driving wind, watching. The ragged cloud, still crowding up behind the peaks southeastward, blotted half the sky; westward the sun, hanging above a table-height, threw on the lake a path of hammered brass. The launch labored across this track and passed behind a wooded promontory.

Silvia's glance came back and met McClellen's. He shook his head. "I've blundered," he said slowly. "I've blundered. I shouldn't have turned back to the gorge. I might have stopped him."

He led the way back to the trail and the shelter of the firs. "Of course," he

said, "Dave thinks I made Lake Keechelus. And I should have been here two hours sooner if I hadn't stopped up there at the headwaters, to trail a goat."

"A mountain-goat?"

"Yes." He missed a step, watching the flicker of interest that lighted her face. "I wish you could have seen him. He stood there, white, clean-cut, on a spur of black rock, looking as if he owned the earth. I had to cross a strip of glacier and creep around that pinnacle to cut him off—but I got him."

"Oh," she said, "it must have been fine; fine! Father says a goat is the most alluring, the hardest creature to reach in all the Cascades. I warn you, he will coax away the horns."

McClellen shook his head. "I'm sorry; I had to leave those horns in a rough place up that gorge. But I tucked a little of the meat into my pack. He was a young fellow; it ought to be prime. And there's no hurry. We'll try a steak right here at the stream, before we go back to your boat."

"I suppose," she answered, "we can hardly venture out through all that dead timber, with the wind like this."

"And when this cloud breaks," he added, "it will be simply flood-gates, open wide."

They had reached a hollow cedar trunk which crumbled like a doorway on the stream side. The bank made a dip there, and he sprang down, over a narrow sub-current, to a gravel bar. Some boulders, securing the accumulations of many freshets, reared a great windbreak, and, in its shelter, he quickly kindled a fire. Then, in a little while, the savory steak was broiling on a spit above red coals, and his small coffee-pot, fixed on a flat hot stone, steamed and sputtered, and sent up a pleasant aroma.

To balance his she set her folding pocket-cup on the improvised table, a flat boulder, but the one plate and fork that his pack supplied were reinforced by a thin fragment of granite and a skewer that he whittled with his hunting-knife. The steak was prime, as he had promised, but the little dinner was hurried to a finish by the rain.

It was a downpour; flood-gates open wide. He picked up his blanket-roll and rifle, and helped her up the bank to the shelter of the hollow cedar trunk. "Oh," she said, "these are the biggest drops I ever saw. You will be wet through in a moment. Come in; there's plenty of room."

He set the gun against the inner wall of the trunk and looked at his sleeve. "They do flatten when they strike, don't they? Like quarters of a dollar. That trail across to the other gorge is going to be wet; too wet for you, and I'm going over and bring your boat around. You won't be afraid, will you? You have the rifle, and I'll hurry."

He was gone before she could answer, and she stood listening to the passing of his body through encroaching branches; the rustle of stiff sword-fern under his tread. Then, on the last footfall, like a heavy curtain, closed the rain. She threw herself down on his blanket to wait. All around her the boughs began to drip; water ran in rivulets along the outer seams of the cedar; and always, above the patter, drop, swish, like the tramp of surf, rose the noise of the wind in the tops of the trees.

Her thoughts went with him along the trail. Now he had reached the great log where the little-used branch began. How sorry—how kind he had been about—Jacques. Now he was doubling that huge trunk beyond which, turning back on his way to the launch, he had met her. Now he was going down the bank of the watercourse. He untied the boat, stepped in, and stood feeling a way out through the tangle with the oar. He grasped trailing boughs and pulled the boat along; sometimes he backed off from a sunken snag, or made a *détour* around a network of submerged limbs. Now he had passed the fallen hemlock. He was catching the full sweep of the wind. Suppose—suppose—another of those dead trees should come down.

She rose to her feet. She hurried through the rain down to the point below the landing, and stood searching the lake for a first sign of him. But

he was not there. Of course it was taking time to bring the boat into open water; she should not have looked for him so soon. She returned to the shelter of the trunk. Then, after a while, she walked again to the point. Still nothing but that sweep of running, wind-whipped crests and the closing curtain of the rain.

Finally she went back once more to the hollow cedar. But she did not rest on his blanket; instead she stood waiting in the natural doorway. He was all right, she assured herself; of course he was all right. He understood the timber; he had a woodman's alertness in emergency, a mountain man's endurance; her father had called McClellan a man of wonderful physique. Still—she should have gone with him. She would follow him, even now, if she could only be sure he would not come, soon, by way of the lake.

She started again toward the point, but directly she stopped, listening. She came back slowly, halting at every step, with her head bent to catch some uncertain echo from the ground. At last she looked up; a sudden brightness leaped in her face. He was returning as he went, by way of the trail.

She saw in a flash that his clothes were dripping, it seemed incredible they could be so wet from the rain, and that his hat was gone. He looked unaccountably worn; then she noticed, as he stopped before her, that his temple had been grazed by an ugly hurt.

"I'm sorry, Miss Silvia," he said, "but I've lost your boat."

"I don't care anything"—she paused, steadying her voice—"about—the boat."

"Another of those dead trees took her," he went on. "I had brought her around that fallen hemlock, with clear water just ahead. I might have saved her, but a tough little snag caught her under the bow and the tree struck her astern. She went like an egg-shell."

"And you?"

"I?" He laughed softly with a glance at his sodden clothes. "Why, I cleared the tangle and splashed around some; and I think I knocked my head, somewhere, before I was through. But it's

nothing; don't let it trouble you. It isn't half as bad as it probably looks."

He laid his hand on her arm and turned her back into the shelter of the trunk. "You must stay here, yes, you must, as long as this rain lasts."

Then he moved by her and sprang down to the gravel bar. He began to work on the rampart of drift, dragging out dry pieces from underneath, with which he rekindled the dying fire. He cut fir boughs and set them to dry against the windbreak. The flames leaped and crackled; the rain passed.

She came down and seated herself on a boulder in the warmth of the blaze. "Now," she said, "if you are ready to go to the cedar and rest in your blanket, I'll dry your clothes."

He threw down a last armful of branches and turned and looked at her. "Thank you, Miss Silvia, I have dry things enough in my pack. But I don't mind a little water; I forgot all about it. The truth is, I've been thinking about your boat. I all but saved her; I tried my best."

"I don't care anything—about—the boat," she repeated.

"Don't you? Well, it's fine of you to say so. But you know, Miss Silvia—he came and seated himself on another rock near her—"you know our only way out, now, is to follow the shore around to the lodge. You understand what that means. There isn't the poorest excuse of a trail and, aside from the drenching woods and the continual danger of falling timber while this wind lasts, there are unbridged streams to cross. Darkness would overtake us, and there isn't a moon. You see—there's no help for it—you must wait right here until morning."

There was a brief silence. The steam began to rise from his clothing. "Jacques," she said, "Jacques—could have taken us through."

"He would have done his best," McClellen admitted. "Jacques would have been ready to try it, and he would have stayed by us."

"He never strayed away," she said. "Don't you remember how he would

come looking back around a curve on a trail, to see what kept us?"

"I remember," McClellen answered, "I remember. And he had the most human, inquiring way of tipping his head on one side when he looked at you. And Jacques could smile. I never saw another dog smile like Jacques."

There was another pause. A mightier rush of wind swept up the gorge. The dip and lift of boughs were like the passing of an army of great wings. Below the wall of drift limbs snapped off and crashed down on the gravel bar. Then McClellen said: "There's just a chance Dave will reach the lodge to-night."

"He will give up trying for anything beyond. Down in the lower lake, where the wind has that long straight sweep, it must be little short of a hurricane. But, if he does make the lodge, and has time to run back through the narrows by daylight, he won't need any urging to come in search of you; and, once in the upper lake, this fire will show him where to look. Still, you mustn't build too much hope on it, Miss Silvia," he added, rising to his feet. "You know even Dave can hardly risk the launch in the narrows at night. The high water has covered too many logs there; in places the current pulls directly over sunken snags."

He went up the bank to the cedar trunk and, reaching in, found the necessary clothing folded in his blanket; then he turned away, seeking a dressing-room for himself, up the bar on the other side of the fire.

The long Northern twilight gathered. Finally he came back dry and freshened, and took his place again on the rock near her. "Oh," she said, "what would have become of me, if you had gone through to Lake Kecheelus?"

"I'm glad I came back this way," he answered, "but I shouldn't have missed the launch."

"That was my fault," she said. "I delayed you. But I was punished, even then, at the start, when you left me there at the falls. And afterward, when I knew about my boat and—Jacques—I called you."

"Yes, I heard you." And he smiled at the wonder in her eyes.

"But how could you? It was before I started across from the gorge. My voice couldn't have carried so far."

"I heard you," he repeated. "That's why I started back."

"You understand," she said after a moment, "I'm very—proud. Proud and—hasty. But I can be grateful and, at least, acknowledge a—mistake. I was afraid of that storm at the first. I—I wanted to come with you, then, around to the launch."

"Of course," he answered, "of course you did. But it's all right; Dave will come back. I shouldn't wonder if the colonel urges him to try the narrows anyway, even in the dark. He has a good lantern. I'm mighty sorry for the colonel to-night. He's having an anxious time."

"About me? Why, he doesn't know I'm here. He isn't home. He went straight on to Yakima with Mr. Burton, when they came down from Box Cañon. That's the reason I came up here alone. I—I hadn't been able to—agree—with father about—things. It was the first time. And the lodge seemed desolate and empty when he was gone. The house seems to stand there forever protesting at the water seeping around. You can't understand that, but I came out on the lake to escape. I kept rowing and drifting and rowing, putting off going back, until I found myself off the mouth of the creek. I never had come so far before, alone, but I pushed up into the gorge to look at the cataract."

"So," said McClellen slowly, "so, the colonel went down to Yakima with Burton. Do you mean Franklin Burton who is interested in the new fruit-lands?"

"Yes." She looked at him in surprise. "Didn't you know it was he who was with father that day you came to the lodge? They didn't bring back many trout, but Mr. Burton had opened a plant, up in Box Cañon. He said the irrigation project meant tremendous possibilities to the old ranch down the Yakima; already alfalfa was growing

there knee-high. And father is going to plant it all in orchard tracts and form a company with him."

"I understand," said McClellen still more slowly, "I understand. But it's strange the colonel never happened to tell me just where that ranch was; strange I never thought to ask him. Still—I haven't seen him for a long time, and I was under the impression that he sold that old stock ranch when he built the lodge up here."

"No, it was only leased."

"I see, Miss Silvia, I see. I shouldn't have found your father so bitter against me, after all." He rose to his feet and stood for a moment looking down at her. "The only one I had to fear, that day—the one who couldn't forgive me—was *just you*."

He turned then, and went a few steps to the windbreak, and, lifting an armful of the boughs he had set there to dry, carried them up to the cedar trunk. He sharpened the butts of the larger ones and drove them into the mold, making the foundation of a springy bed. When he came back for a second supply she was standing, leaning a little on the rampart, almost in his way.

He picked up a bough, then dropped it and turned his direct, challenging glance on her. "See here," he said, "be generous. Look at things once from my side. I didn't see the end, those days when I first knew you, and, afterward, when I had finished my investigations, and saw that this one sheet of water, out of all the chain of lakes I had explored, was the one naturally adapted, the most valuable to the irrigation project, what could I do? Think, Miss Silvia. It was just that one solitary lodge against the reclamation of the great sage-brush wilderness; myriads of thrifty homes."

"I know, I know." Her voice vibrated a little; her face in the firelight alternately clouded and brightened. "I'm not so narrow, so self-centered as you believe. I can understand—you've taught me—that a man in your position, like a soldier, must put the government first. To compromise with private interests is—treason."

He nodded his head slowly. "That's the way of it, Miss Silvia; you have put the case well. I've grown fond of the lodge, you know that; and I'm a man who thinks a lot of his friends and—of a home. But, in the face of all the coming generations, my happiness, the lifetime of one man, shrinks small."

He bent and picked up the bough he had dropped and, while he completed the armful, she went back to her seat on the rock. Finally, when he had taken the last load, she followed, and stood watching him through the aperture in the trunk, while he finished the couch. But when he spread his blanket over it she protested.

"It's very dry and warm in here," she said. "This trunk holds the heat from the fire like a little room. And I have my sweater. I—indeed—indeed—I don't need your blanket."

"Why, that's all right. I have as snug a place down there the other side of the fire. These granite slabs roof it, and they hold heat like an oven. And I'm used to nights under the sky. Last night I slept next to a snow-field, with the wind drawing straight across. That was cold." He smiled, shaking his head, and stepped outside. "You are perfectly safe," he added, when she had entered, "but, if it makes you feel any more secure, remember you have my gun. Good night; if you want anything, let me know."

He stopped to set a bough in the aperture. It was as though her own door at home had closed. A key, turned in the lock, could not have seemed more secure.

"Good night," she answered. Then she called softly, like one speaking through a fastened door: "If you had done any differently about the dam I never could have respected you again."

She knew that he heard, for he stopped an uncertain moment on the bank before he sprang down to the gravel bar. She listened while he added fuel to the camp-fire, then she settled herself on the couch and, smiling a little, turned her face to the wall.

The bed was very comfortable. The heat from the fire filtered through the

needles of the bough and distilled a luxurious fragrance through the improvised room. Wrapped in his blanket, Silvia slept warm and well.

When at last she awakened she started to her elbow, listening. The storm was over, and the snap of a burning twig cut the stillness like a report. Then she heard a stone move; steps on the gravel. She rose and looked out through the meshes of the bough. McClellen was down there, tramping slowly, mechanically, before the fire. Except that he lacked the rifle he might have been a sentry on guard, but at the end of a long watch. Presently he stopped and, drawing his hand across his eyes, threw back his head and looked at the sky. The stars were paling; there was a hint of dawn.

She put aside the bough and went out to the edge of the bank. "Oh," she said, "you must have had a wretched night; it must have been an impossible bed among those rocks."

"Why, I'm all right." He came to the edge of the channel and stood looking up at her. "Is there something I can do for you?"

"No, only I'm coming down." She held out her hands and he took them while she sprang lightly over. "I feel so guilty," she went on. "I've had the best sleep the night through; that bed was splendid. But I want you to try it now, while I stand guard."

"Well, thank you, but there isn't any further need of a watch, Miss Silvia; the wind, you see, has gone down. While it lasted I was afraid some of these sparks would carry; there's so much resin in these trees that, even when the woods are wet, there's always danger. That old cedar, where you were sheltered, would have gone like tinder. But I'm glad you slept."

"And you will rest now." She lifted her face to him, half in protest, half in appeal. "You look so tired."

He did not answer. He stood looking down at her, but with his head turned a little, listening to some distant sound, down in the direction of the lake. Presently it was repeated, nearer, pi-

ping on the stillness; the whistle of the launch.

"Dave," she said quickly. "Dave has come back. He did stop at the lodge, and Hanafusa told him about me."

McClellen swung around and, looking down the gorge, lifted his voice in a great hail. It was answered by three short signals.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, the launch is here. You will be home, at the lodge, in time for breakfast."

He hurriedly scattered the fire and covered the smoldering embers with gravel. "It seems dark at first, but we can't take risks with the forest, and you will get used to it. Come, give me your hand, this is the step up the bank. Day is breaking; we'll be able to find the landing."

But at the cedar trunk he stopped once more. "The night is over," he said unsteadily. "You—rested well.

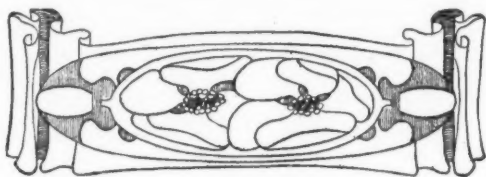
Now tell me, before we go, just what you meant about the dam."

"I don't care any more about the dam," she answered; "but—there was a woman—you spoke of that day; a woman—and a lake, tucked away like a jewel in a pocket of the mountains."

"You were that woman. But see here—see here——" He paused, trying in the dim light to fathom her face. "Haven't you always known that—Silvia?"

A branch snapped somewhere down the trail; a heavy body plunged incautiously and grappled with the underbrush; then Dave's voice broke in an impatient "Hello."

"When will you show me the lake?" she asked. And she added very softly, with a little halt in her voice, as she turned, groping, into the trail: "It must be a wonderful place—for a lodge."



'TIS APRIL NOW

DEAR little friend that bade me to forget,
'Tis April now, the heart must have its own!
Thine eyes reopen in the violet,
Thy voice hath found the singing brook and grown
Into its undertone!

O'er ranks of dandelions the early sun
Doth weave thy hair, a web of tangled light;
And the wild fragrances that one by one
Steal out of woodland dusks at edge o' night,
Wraiths are they, still and white,

Of rare bygone caresses. There is set
Thine image in each blossom-burdened bough;
The linnet sings thee! Did I say—Forget?
Ah, Heart of mine, 'twas Winter heard my vow—
'Tis April now!

MARGARET BELLE HOUSTON.

FISHBAIT AND WIVES



It is so long since my children were really little children that I had forgotten in what tortuous ways our social customs get to them. It was Cunningham who taught it to me all over again. The very first day we were at the shore, I noticed him among the other children because of the high development of his social gifts. I noticed that he was as pretty as an angel, and that he had brown legs, and I put him down for five years old. And at the same time I noticed that the world seemed to him a vast social event. There were no strangers in it for Cunningham. He talked to every one with his lovely friendliness, that was as little bold as it was shy.

It was not long before he had engaged me in conversation.

"Is he your little boy?" he asked, pointing to my son Jimmie.

"Yes," I replied.

"Is she your little girl?" he asked, pointing to Agnes.

"No, she is my little niece."

"How many children have you got?"

Cunningham asked next.

"Three," I said.

"Are you married?" asked Cunningham; at which I heard my sister Maria give a startled, "Mercy me!" Cunningham did not notice. His large gaze was fixed on me waiting for my reply.

"Yes," I said, "I am married."

"Good!" he cried, and clapped his hands. "My father and mother are married, too."

I told him I was glad to hear it.

"I am married, too," Cunningham next volunteered. "I've got two wives

already. Jean, she's one"—he pointed out a little girl grubbing in the sand—"and Miss Allen, she's another; only sometimes her name isn't Miss Allen; sometimes it's Mrs. Cunningham Forsyth. Some days, when you're married," he went on, "your name is just like your husband's. Is Agnes married?" he asked.

"I haven't heard of it," I answered him.

Cunningham's eye strayed from Agnes' white dress to the large blue bow which tied her curls.

"I guess she wants to be married," he remarked.

I heard Maria mutter "Good Heavens!" over her embroidery.

"What makes you think that?" I asked.

"When girls curl their hair," Cunningham explained, "and look pretty all the time, it's because they want to be married."

He gave out this piece of sapienty with sweet directness, as impersonally as he might have said: "You get wet if you stay out in the rain."

"That's why I married Miss Allen. She curls her hair and looks pretty all the time. I guess I'll marry Agnes some time," he announced obligingly. "I will ask Miss Allen if I can. You have to ask," he went on, "before you can get married again. I know a song about it."

He stood up before me and piped in his shrill treble:

"Waiting at the church, waiting at the church;

Can't get away to marry you to-day.
My wife (bang!) won't let me."

"You see," said he triumphantly, "you have to ask. It's in the song. I learned

it in the grandpa-phone. There's a grandpa-phone down the street that sings like mens all day."

Cunningham had just heard of husbands and wives, that was why they interested him so much. That evening I saw him seated between Miss Allen and a personable young man whom my oldest son Osborn had told me in hushed tones was Ned Carey; I could not very well have a son who was a freshman in college without having learned that Ned Carey was something tremendous in the way of athletics. I believe he did amazing things with a football.

"Well, now you're married to Miss Allen," said Ned Carey, "you must take good care of her, mustn't you?"

"I thought she'd take care of me," Cunningham objected.

"Oh, no, that's not the way it is at all. A man has to take care of his wife. He must get her everything she wants, and do everything she wishes."

"And," Miss Allen broke in, "especially he ought to help her across the streets, so carts won't run over her; instead of running on ahead, he ought to take hold of her hand tight."

Cunningham turned his grave, tranquil gaze from one to the other.

"I didn't know," he said simply. "She's so big; tall as——" he searched around—"tall as the five-horn giraffe!" he brought out. "And I thought big ones always took care of boys only five years old."

"Well, you're quite mistaken," Ned Carey told him. "The bigger they are the more you have to look after them."

Cunningham's mind didn't stay long on the responsibilities of life.

"I think," he announced, "Agnes would like me to marry her. She's that little girl down there on the sand, with the blue ribbon. May I marry Agnes, Miss Allen?" he asked.

Miss Allen gave permission with an admirable seriousness. She was not one of those girls who laugh at little boys. Cunningham ran down the beach calling sweetly to Agnes:

"Agnes, you're married to me. My name is Cunningham Forsyth, and I'm five years old."

At this I saw Jimmie's mouth make itself up for derisive laughter, then the laughter faded into a kindly smile. Jimmie had realized that Cunningham was not to be sneered at as a big boy might have been; he was a baby, and his actions, therefore, were to be judged from a different point of view. At seven, Agnes was far enough advanced in the social amenities to see the joke, and announced herself as Cunningham's wife as any older girl might have done. He put his arm around her waist, and she put hers around his shoulder and gave him a kiss, which he received with serenity, not being old enough yet to know that kisses are shameful.

Jimmie watched this pretty little scene with the majestic tolerance of a large dog watching puppies at play. Soon, however, these infantile gambols bored him.

"You can come and dig bait for me if you want to, Agnes," he gave out.

Agnes has advanced very much in the last few months. A year ago she would have gone anywhere with Jimmie to dig any kind of bait. But she had learned some lessons of the perversity of her sex from my daughter Edith, so she replied:

"I don't feel like digging bait. I don't like digging it."

Jimmie was aggrieved. Here he was, twelve years old, and kind enough to notice a seven-year-old girl, and instead of appreciating it, she dared to be insubordinate.

"You'll be sorry!" he threatened.

Agnes gave her curls an irritating toss and turned her back on Jimmie. Jimmie went down in the sand, dug with a clam-rake a minute, and held to view a squirming animal. But Agnes gave an affected little scream that might have come from a fifteen-year-old throat. She did not really, as well I knew, mind the creature at all, but she wished to seem grown up, having her eyes fastened on the company assembled on the bulkhead.

"Ouch!" she screamed. "Take it away! I won't ever dig that kind for you, Jimmie Preston! I don't like 'em! They look so nasty!" And having

shown her place for consideration as a grown-up young lady, she fell to playing with Cunningham and Jean, and Jimmie turned away, grumbling: "All right for you!"

Cunningham's cottage is next door to ours, and is flanked by a commodious and empty dog-kennel. Next day, I saw him playing around it, singing that endless song of happy childhood. He was cleaning house.

"Do look what that child's got in his hand!" exclaimed Maria. "Why, Editha, it's a sink-brush—and a more greasy one I never saw. It's strange to me," she continued, "why children always gravitate naturally to the dirtiest thing they can lay their hands on, and I should have a higher opinion of Mrs. Forsyth if she'd burned it a month ago."

But Cunningham, his sink-brush firmly in his hand, gave his house an elaborate cleaning. He got salt water in a little tin pail, and worked hard all the morning. At low tide he picked up a complete set of dishes. He was making a home for his brides. Later in the day, he got from somewhere the end of a pot of green copper paint, of the kind with which they paint the bottoms of boats, and painted his new home with the sink-brush. That Mrs. Forsyth did not interfere seemed to me to redound to her credit, but Maria declared that she did not know what that woman could be about.

Agnes and Jean also became interested in making their home, and all three children worked very hard over it. They mapped out an elaborate garden with shells. Later, Miss Allen was called in triumph to take possession of her new home. It was large enough for Miss Allen and Cunningham to get in at once, or Cunningham and the two little girls.

"'Twould have been nicer," I heard Cunningham tell her sweetly, "if you'd been a smaller size. I like you just as much," he reassured her, "but I shall have to ask my father to build a woodshed to keep you in."

Cunningham made an ideal husband. He gave a lesson of how happy married life may be to any one who chose to

watch him. Even the older boys would stop to watch Cunningham as, dressed in his father's sou'wester, he would kiss all of his ladies good-by, saying "Good-by, dear wives," and start on imaginary cruises. Even Jimmie had no sarcasms for Cunningham.

The reason for Cunningham's success as a married man was that he devoted himself entirely to his family. He even showed himself attentive to his seventeen children. As long as he did so, all went well. It went well until the adventure of life began to call to him, and the adventure of life presented itself to him in the doings of my son, Jimmie.

It is a nice thing to know that every one is a hero to some one else. As I look around, it seems to me one of the things that make the world better.

I was sitting on the wooden structure along our water-front known as the "bulkhead," watching the social life of the beach. Our beach is a little world in miniature. It sums up in itself all the seven ages of man. If one only had the eyes to see all that was going on, it might be possible to construct the greater part of a world out of the sights that lie before one.

What interested me most was Cunningham, who was seated on the end of a flat-bottomed rowboat which was partly on dry land and partly in the water. He was fishing gravely over the side. He had a line and a bent pin. We do not use rods in these parts, as our fishermen are deep-water fishermen. The reason Cunningham went fishing is because Jimmy has a passionate interest in the capture of fish. Jimmy is Cunningham's hero, and he tried to be like him as much as he knew how.

It was a great day in Cunningham's life, although one would not expect great events to follow on the discovery that there were such things in the world as bloodsuckers, which are the noisome species of bait even Agnes won't dig.

I first learned of their existence through Maria. We are making shift to keep house without our old cook Seraphy, who is on a vacation, and have a woman come in by the day to do our cooking.

Maria regards her dealings with the ice-box with deep suspicion, and it is my sister's custom, after the woman departs, to poke around and come to me with dark words like: "She couldn't have eaten *all* the chicken that left the table," or "She *said* she left it clean—and see here!" And Maria would poke a rag under my nose. "Slime—greasy slime! You'll have to tell her to-morrow—I don't pretend to give orders in your house, Editha—you'll have to tell her to-morrow to take a bucket of hot water and some soda and scald that ice-box out. *Typhoid* is what hatches in slime like that!"

One night, when Maria was playing her evening game of Arctic exploration, I heard a shriek. I hastened to the scene.

"What is it, Maria?" I asked.

"My heavens!" replied Maria. "I don't know what it is! It's something horrible—simply horrible! It's alive in a tomato can in the back there." She pointed a tragic finger at the innocent-looking ice-box. "I just wanted to see if she'd saved that half-can of tomatoes that was left, and I took out what I thought was the tomato can, and it was squirming—yes, Editha, it was squirming! You can look and see for yourself! I won't look again."

It was squirming, as Maria had said, and very unlovely.

"One of the boys has got to throw it out, whatever it is, and however it got there!" proclaimed Maria. "It's probably one of those awful kinds of sea-fish like snails, foreigners eat. Why, like as not we've had it in our chowder before now, whatever it is! I thought that the chowders tasted very queer lately. Do you know what she puts in the chowder, Editha?"

I didn't.

"Well, she sha'n't put it in this next. It's got to be thrown out. Here, Jimmie," she called, as she heard my youngest son's footsteps, "take this can and throw it away."

"That's my bait," cried Jimmie. "I won't throw my bait away, need I, mother?"

"It's your *what*?" demanded Maria.

It's the grief of my sister's life that she isn't the fainting kind. I know she would have gladly swooned away on this occasion.

"What," Maria wanted to know, "is your bait doing in the ice-box. Do you allow your boys to keep vermin in the ice-box, Editha? I never saw such a boy!"

"Vermin!" cried Jimmie, with indignation. "Bait ain't vermin. When vermin ain't rats they bite."

"What made you put them in there, Jimmie?" I asked.

"I put 'em in there to keep. They keep lots longer on ice. They'll keep alive all the time. Mrs. Susa don't mind."

Here Jimmie's aunt, whose anger had overcome her first horror, seized the can firmly and proceeded to the window with it. She flung it out into the darkness.

"Oh, now, oh, now!" cried Jimmie. "See what she's done! She's thrown 'em out—she's thrown out my blood-suckers on me!"

"Jimmie," I said sternly, "I agree with your Aunt Maria. The refrigerator is no place for bloodsuckers."

"They don't do any harm," argued my son. "They're perfectly clean—they live in the clean sand. I put 'em in a clean can, too. I washed it out myself first. I wish now I hadn't! No matter how hard a fellow tries to please people, it ain't any use. I s'pose you think," he went on, speaking to his Aunt Maria aggrievedly, "that I'd like to eat out of a dirty refrigerator better'n you would! They're not a bit dirtier than any old live lobster, or oysters. They look a lot cleaner than a lot of blue, slimy oysters in a pail."

"That will do, Jimmie," said I.

"Now I've got to go an' pick 'em up!" growled Jimmie. "Just the same," he threw aggrievedly over his shoulder, "if you weren't used to oysters and were used to bloodsuckers, you'd set up just the same yell."

"That will do," I repeated, all the more annoyed that Jimmie's reasoning had the elements of truth in it.

Maria went into the sitting-room, and collapsed into her rocker.

"To think," she moaned, "that I've been going to that refrigerator night after night, and there, like as not, those creatures have been, ready to spring at me! There they've been, crawling over our next day's food! I'll never eat a bite as long as I'm at the shore again. I feel as if my appetite had gone forever. Every night of my life I've gone and looked into that refrigerator since we've been here; but of course I didn't think of looking into *every* can I saw. I should die of mortification if it ever got to be known that we'd been fostering vermin in our own ice-box. You have such a queer sense of humor," Maria continued, in the tone of one who accuses another of lack of delicacy, "that you will understand when I say that I can imagine you telling about this as something funny. It doesn't seem funny to me, Editha. It seems to me shameful that grown women should not have discovered those things before, and if this ever gets about—if you even tell Henry—I shall go back home. I shouldn't have the courage to show my face on the bulkhead again."

Next morning, early, I heard Cunningham's little voice piping under my window.

"I'm pickin' 'em up for Jimmie," I heard him say. "His Aunt Maria threw 'em out of the window. He can't keep 'em in the ice-box any more."

"Did Jimmie keep them in the ice-box?" I heard Miss Allen's horrified voice.

"Yes," said Cunningham, "so they'd keep alive. When they get dead they smell; but his Aunt Maria threw 'em out."

There was no criticism in Cunningham's tone, only the grave wonder of childhood at the unaccountable actions of the grown up.

Later in the day he came to Miss Allen on the bulkhead.

"I've got something for you, Mrs. Forsyth," he said. "It's a bloodsucker. I *love* bloodsuckers, don't you?"

Miss Allen then showed what a nice girl she is by rising to the occasion.

"I'll let you keep it for me," she told Cunningham. "It'll be mine just the same, but you keep my bloodsucker for me." She spoke of it affectionately, as one might of a pet kitten.

"All right," Cunningham agreed happily, for it had cost him a pang to part with Jimmie's generous gift.

At this point the little idyl was broken in on by voices rising high in altercation.

"How'd I know you'd use that bath-house, Aunt Maria?" Jimmie's voice was saying. "Where *can* I keep 'em, then? Ain't there no place I can keep my bait? They weren't doing any harm on the shelf under the lookin'-glass. Mother," he complained, an indignant quiver in his voice, "Aunt Maria's goin' to throw out my bait again—all my bait, that it took me an hour to dig—bloodsuckers is awful scarce sometimes. She won't let me keep 'em under the bed in my own room," he complained to the world at large; "she won't let me keep 'em in the refrigerator, an' now she says I can't even keep 'em in the bath-house! And," he went on, his voice rising shriller, "she eats more of the fish I catch with 'em than anybody else. She just eats fish an' fish, so that there ain't any left for any one, unless you hurry up. And then she throws my bait away on me!"

Cunningham ran up to Jimmie, all concern.

"Can't I keep your bait for you?" he asked. "Can't I? Let me keep it for you."

"Where'd you keep 'em?" asked Jimmie, with suspicion.

"I've got a little house," said Cunningham, "where I could keep 'em."

He pointed to the dog-kennel.

"I'll keep 'em in there for you, Jimmie," went on Cunningham, with eagerness, "an' nobody sha'n't ever touch 'em, an' your Aunt Maria can't get in." He looked Maria over with his innocent gaze. "Your Aunt Maria'd stick if she tried to."

"You won't be careful of 'em," Jimmie objected.

"Oh, yes, I will," Cunningham protested, "an' I'll dig you more, Jimmie."

I can dig like anything. I'll dig 'em for you, an' I'll keep 'em for you," he cried joyfully.

"All right," Jimmie was gracious enough to assent.

Cunningham went away, his face beaming. He had gone another step on the road to true hero-worship. He had found out a way of serving his hero, and Jimmie had gone another step on the road of being a hero. He had permitted himself to be served.

For between accepting service and exacting it, there is a great difference.

Now Cunningham began to turn himself to a man's work in the world. Through long hours he solemnly gathered bloodsuckers on the beach. His wives and children called to him in vain. When a man needlessly lets sport interfere with domestic life, there is sure to be trouble, and trouble came, just as I have seen it come a hundred times with grown-up men and women. Agnes and Jean played together sulkily. Cunningham was so much a part of their game of make-believe that they couldn't do without him. They resented this intrusion of the world.

"Why can't you pretend that they're your children, too?" I heard Cunningham ask. "And then we'd have lots more."

"I won't pretend they're my children," I heard Agnes protest indignantly. "Nasty, leggy things! I won't have 'em in my house."

"It's my house!" cried Cunningham. "Don't you touch my can. It's my house." Then, with a return of his ordinary sweetness: "Won't you pretend they're your children, Jean?" he implored.

Jean is younger. She wavered an instant, but caught Agnes' eye.

"No, I won't," she brought out flatly.

"Well, then, I won't have your old dolls for my children any more," Cunningham announced.

He darted into the kennel, and then there came through the door a shower of dolls. One after another, Cunningham flung them forth upon the sand, where they sprawled in despairing attitudes. With shrieks of outraged ma-

ternity, Jean and Agnes fell upon their young.

"You're a mean little boy, Cunningham Forsyth!" Agnes shrielled. She dove into her desecrated home and hurled forth the can of bait on to the sand, where she and Agnes trampled on it with fury. It was a terrible spectacle. Cunningham tried to rescue the sacred bait of his hero, but in vain. At last, lashed to a madness, he fell upon his wives. Elders came running from every direction, and Cunningham was borne away by Miss Allen, screaming:

"I won't have you for my wife any more, Jean Adams! I won't be married to either of you! You sha'n't play in my house! I'm goin' to keep my bait there alone for Jimmie!"

"Hush!" Miss Allen tried to pacify him. "Hush!"

But Cunningham was beside himself.

"I won't have any wives any more!" he cried. "I won't have you, even. Can't you marry her?" he sobbed to Ned Carey. "I don't want her any more. You take her."

He struggled away from Miss Allen's arms and went back to the sand, to mourn over the remains of his bloodsuckers, where Jimmie found him.

"What's the matter, Cunningham?" Jimmie asked.

"It was Agnes and Jean," he wailed. "They threw 'em out."

Jimmie put a kind hand on Cunningham's shoulder.


"That's just like girls," he told him, "always raising rows and spoiling fun. Don't you mind, Cunningham. Girls is all like that, even when they're old, like my Aunt Maria. Don't you care. Next low tide you can dig me some more," he went on comfortingly.

He sat down beside Cunningham on the shore.

"Don't go and cry like a girl-kid," he urged; at which Cunningham rubbed his fists into his eyes.

The great change that comes to all babies had come to Cunningham. He was a little boy now, not a baby, and from now on I knew he would occupy himself with a boy's work in the world.

THE GIFT OF THE GROOM



It could not be dodged any longer; the time had come when he simply had to make that call on old Hatchett's widow. If there was anything in all creation that he, Jack Sands Junior, loathed next to an afternoon tea, it was a call of condolence. However, the real object of this dreaded visit was a business one; so after the few preliminary words and a sympathetic pause, he could plunge into safer waters and soon have the thing over. But it was that pause which haunted him!

He had left a card at her door weeks ago, when she first arrived in town, but he had put off seeing her in person day after day; and now this sudden and inexplicable tumble in certain of her copper stock made it absolutely necessary to see her at once, before the market opened the next morning.

In short, the Widow Hatchett had to be called upon that very evening—hang it all! That meant a hurried dinner at the club, a cigarette instead of a cigar, and reaching Di Centre's box too late, in all probability, for the second act of the only opera he cared one sou ever to hear again as long as he lived.

Jack wished profoundly that he could have got through the whole confounded business with Jonah Hatchett's widow over the telephone, but a fellow can't very well yell at a presumably heart-broken woman: "Hullo! Yes—Sands. So sorry about your husband! Awfully sudden! Awfully sorry! Exactly—well—er, now as to this tremendous

slump in Rattlesnake Consolidated, I want your permission to——" No, it could not be done over the telephone!

The sympathetic pause which Sands felt to be so incumbent, was more than likely to be interrupted by an impertinent "Waiting! Waiting!" from "central." Jack leaned back in his chair and swore luxuriously at himself, at women generally, and widows specifically. Wasn't this the fourth he had had left on his hands by inconsiderate clients? It certainly was, counting that bogus one of old Hatchett's, the scandal of which he had just waded through triumphantly, to the everlasting renown of Sands and Company, Brokers, who had had charge for twelve years of the Wall Street end of Jonah Hatchett's copper interests. Jack's degree of LL.D. had proved no small factor in the success of his father's firm. Jack Sands Senior was equipped with the necessary temperament to make a daring and successful broker, while Jack Sands Junior had the cool head and trained hands to steer them clear of disaster, at whatever speed they drove.

At eight o'clock Sands Junior threw his half-smoked cigar into the open grate before him and arose, yawned and stretched himself, taking as it were a regretful leave of all of a bachelor's liberties and licenses at once. By dining alone, and cutting his dessert altogether, he had, after all, partly achieved the desired after-dinner smoke. The other fellows at the club were either still in the café or had gone about their evening's diversions.

Sands glanced at the mirror in the hall, still under the delusion that he had

hair enough left to get awry. Then, adjusting his waistcoat with a certain growing difficulty as the years advanced, he humped himself into his overcoat and plunged out into the night, muttering to himself, as he bent his head to meet the wind and driving rain:

"Now for silence and sepulchers; sobs and sighs; sackcloth and cypress! And may the Lord have mercy upon me, a sinner!"

After he had rung the bell at the late Jonah Hatchett's very familiar and very ornate front door, Sands recalled the fact that he had never met the legal widow of Hatchett, although for a time on distressfully intimate terms with the sham Mrs. Hatchett.

The old man had been married only three weeks when he died very suddenly, in St. Louis, on his way East with his bride; who was a person he had met somewhere in the far West, where he had made his ever-mounting millions. Bride, indeed! Sands could see her in his mind's eye! He had been told that she was a "worthy" creature—that meant forty, raw-boned, with enormous freckled hands—he was dead sure about the hands!—and she'd be dressed like the very devil, and say "Yes, sir," to him. The Other had been proven "unworthy," and she had been the reverse of all this—round and fluffy, given over to imperfect syntax and tea-gowns, and calling him "dear," even to the bitter, tearful ending of her blackmailing suit, when she had been forced to throw down her cards.

The maid opened the door and admitted him. Taking off his overcoat, Sands followed her into that awful 1870 drawing-room he so well remembered. Over the shoulders of the servant, Sands' eyes darted ahead and saw in the room beyond, a girlish figure in black, with sunny hair which caught the light, bending over the open fire.

She looked around startled, sprang erect, and seized something from the hearth, and thrust it under the draped center-table. Then she came rapidly toward him into the front room, smiling and holding out her hand, which was soft and warm and very small.

"I'm so glad you came!" were her first words, in a curiously high but sweet voice. He wanted to laugh, but thought better of it.

"Can I see Mrs. Hatchett?" he asked rather coldly, accustomed of late to repelling feminine advances.

"Certainly," said the golden-haired girl, sitting down, smiling expectantly.

Sands quickly readjusted several of his ideas respecting his late client, and then made haste to say:

"I should have been here before, Mrs. Hatchett, to express my——"

"Oh, well, I understand," she conciliated, her tone full of a rather motherly tolerance of all negative and positive ill-doing.

She raised one of her pretty hands and pointed to a large armchair, with its imitation ecclesiastical frame—one of old Hatchett's piteous attempts to acquire civilization as quickly as he had money.

"Would you mind if we went into the other room nearer the fire? It's a horrible night out, and I got a bit damp." As Sands spoke he saw a startled look come into her big childish eyes, which he recalled later. But she did as he asked, and he followed her. "What a pretty, cheery, little creature she is," thought he, "and with such delicious hair, like a child's. So entirely different from any of my other widows."

And he wondered what on earth had ever induced her to marry old Jonah Hatchett—he of the iron will and jaw, a miser with his tailor, a spendthrift with his jeweler, as distrustful in his dealings with his fellow men as one of the wild animals in his great Western mountain ranges; with an outward blatant scorn for Eastern men and manners, and yet a secret longing to be one of them, and one with them, which always struck Sands as rather pathetic. The best that could be said of him was that he had been what the world agrees to call honest, and that he drank the best wines and smoked the very best tobacco. Jack always remembered that to his client's credit.

The young widow sat staring at her

late husband's agent with an extraordinary friendliness, which under the circumstances he found rather paralyzing to his purpose. He coughed gently and looked elsewhere. The long rooms were ablaze with unshaded light. A great bowl of red roses was on the grand piano, which was open and covered with scattered music. Some sprigs of mignonette were in a hideous vase on the hideous center-table. Somehow the object of his sad mission had suddenly become difficult to introduce into so cheerful, if not actually festive, an atmosphere.

"I suppose you—er—know who—I am, Mrs. Hatchett? And the probable purpose of my intrusion upon you?" began Sands, adopting his business manner, a happy blending of a sort of deep, if entirely impersonal interest, with an adamant dignity. It had seldom failed to keep his female clients on exactly the right plain of intercourse.

"Oh, no! I don't know, or really care—I mean why you came," was the unexpected reply of this extraordinary widow.

Sands stared blankly—*had* he made a mistake in the house?

"As one of the executors of the late Mr. Hatchett's estate—I suppose you know that my father and I were made so by terms of the will, jointly with yourself, of course?"

"Are you?" she cooed. "No, I didn't know. How could I?"

Jack began to see daylight. Jonah Hatchett had married a pretty imbecile, some of her people had sold the poor, simple, little thing outright to the old millionaire!

"I supposed of course you had been sent a copy of the will, and all that, by Mr. Hatchett's Butte City lawyer, after you came East. He wrote me to leave it all to him—the whole thing. Why hasn't Spinott told you?"

His tone had sent the blood to her face, and she sat with lowered eyes fingering her black dress. Then suddenly she looked full into Sands' eyes.

"Because I refused to see him when he came on to St. Louis to—to the

funeral, and I returned all of his letters!"

"Ah!" came from Jack Sands; at last he had touched something solid; something that confirmed his own instincts about J. I. Spinott of Butte City. The little widow had at least flashes of intelligence.

"And no one had explained matters to you at the time of your marriage?"

"Oh, no! Father and Mr. Hatchett gave up trying to make me understand business years and years ago. I'm very stupid about such things. I never could understand about money. It doesn't interest me. It made him—my husband—very unhappy at the end. There were a few hours of delirium, and he talked and talked something about 'a pack of wolves and a child alone among them.' Miss Hedge got it into her head that he meant me. She came on after my second telegram. She got there two hours before the end. I was so frightened! It was so terrible!"

She said it as simply as if she were a child, and it flashed through Sands' mind that if this woman didn't marry old Hatchett for mercenary reasons, in heaven's name what did she marry him for? Her motive was apparently not a sinister one, and yet she certainly was very far from being overwhelmed by his death, and was much too transparent to disguise the fact.

"I'm very sorry, Mrs. Hatchett, to be compelled to talk upon a subject so irksome to you, but we will have to give a little time to it this evening. I should like your consent, your signature to several papers, which I will endeavor to explain to you if you will allow me. Mr. Spinott will be here next week; we've got to decide something rather important before I go to-night. The fault is mine. I should—"

"Is *he* coming?" she cried. Jack nodded.

"Don't let him come near me! Please don't let him come here! You know the way a wolf will dog some weaker animal day after day, day and night? You know that? Well, he's been like that ever since mother died. He was father's lawyer, and afterward something

they call a trustee. He's had all to do with father's mine, the Constance Hilton Mine—that was mother's name. Father said that was why it was so lucky. He trusted Mr. Spinott, but Miss Hedge and I didn't. He was always coming on business, you know. We called him 'Judas Iscariot' behind father's back."

After a short pause, during which Sands Junior watched her with keen interest, she added quickly:

"Why do you want me to sign those papers before he comes? Doesn't he want me to sign them?"

"I rather suspect not," chuckled Sands.

"I'll sign them!" was all she said, getting up from her chair. Then Sands laughed outright. A child among wolves indeed!

"Just tell me where to sign," she said drearily, sitting down at a large roll-top desk between the windows.

"Is that your usual way of doing business?" said Sands, in what he meant to be a stern voice.

"Oh, everybody has brought me things to sign ever since I have grown up; and they always say 'just sign here'—and I signed and signed and signed! There's no use trying to explain!"

She sat at the desk with her pen suspended over a paper Sands had spread out before her. All the light and youth and smiles had gone out of her; she looked hurt and disappointed about something, and for the life of him Jack could not think what it might be.

"Say where, please," she repeated listlessly.

He smiled and shook his head. "No, Mrs. Hatchett, you've got to listen and decide of your own free will. We don't do business that way. I'll put it as simply and briefly as possible. My father and I want your free and full permission to use your resources to buy—to continue buying—a certain stock which is being offered in large blocks every day, with an evident intention of breaking the stock. I haven't quite fathomed it yet, but Rattlesnake Con-

solidated is too good to pass by, and so —"

"Why, that's the name of the stock he wanted to—Mr. Spinott, I mean—wanted to what he called borrow the night I left St. Louis. I remember the name because all the way East with Uncle Jonah—I mean, Mr. Hatchett—men kept coming to him on the cars and talking to him about it. Mr. Spinott sent the paper in to me to sign by Miss Hedge. We thought it was so dreadful of him at such a time!"

"What did you do?" demanded Sands quickly. "I mean about that paper?"

"I refused either to see him or to sign it. Here it is—I kept it, although he sent word please to return it, because—"

"Because?"

"I hate him! Nobody knows how I hate him. For years and years I've made it a point not to do anything he asked me to do—except, of course, sign things. And lately I've stopped doing that."

Sands examined the paper she had given him with considerable curiosity, and asked her if he might keep it.

"Well, this let's a little light on what has been puzzling us of late. I suspected that Spinott was at the bottom of these Western bear-sales, and this paper tells why he's coming East. I don't want you to see him alone, Mrs. Hatchett. Telephone me any hour, day or night—let me be a witness to whatever passes."

"I shall not see him! Nothing on earth will make me see him!" cried the widow. "Oh, I wish Miss Hedge would hurry and come to me!"

"Until she does, will you accept my help, my advice in this matter? I should like you to see this man, but not alone."

Sands' position was not an easy one; his father said that she must be made to do certain things for her own benefit, and yet Jack insisted that her decision must be ethically free. So much for putting off this call till the last moment! It had never entered his head that old Jonah Hatchett had left a helpless child like this on their hands. She must be protected against the "wolves"—she

signed her name much too easily. So he leaned an elbow on the desk and talked to her, bent on making her see the wisdom of his proposition.

He soon discovered that she was not listening, as she sat leaning on her left elbow, while with the right hand she drew with the pen, that she still held, rings of dots all over the blotting-pad lying before her. That she was not even trying to understand what he was saying was provokingly obvious.

Finally, he roused himself and took the matter in his own hands as others had done before him, and imposed upon her his own decision. The matter was too imperative to await her intelligent understanding of it. So she wrote her signature when he advised, or withheld it at his suggestion with equal indifference. He was struck with the rapid assurance of her signature, "Rose Hilton Hatchett." She wrote it as a man might, in one quick rush, with a flourish at the end. The poor thing had evidently done it so often in her life! As for any expression of opinion, Sands found her hopeless; not only had she detached herself completely from him and his topic, but a certain resentment against him had dampened her first cordial manner. She replied coldly and avoided his eyes.

Finally, he arose from the desk and thanked her. The evening would have come to a restrained and conventional close if he had not gone back to the fireplace and pushed back a chair out of his path with the sharp jerk of a man who keeps up his athletics. There was a click and a clatter, and out from under the draped table flew a corn-popper, which came unfastened and the snow-white contents flew all over the hearth-rug!

"That's the odor I caught when I came in!" cried Sands, laughing heartily, as he stooped to gather up the little fragrant snow-drift.

Presently he noticed that she was silent, and he glanced quickly up at her, and saw that she was standing with close-clasped hands, her lips trembling, her eyes full of tears. He arose at once and watched her in amazement. She

laughed when he expected her to cry, and she cried when he expected her to laugh!

She turned away quickly, and sank into a great cushioned chair, against the back of which she hid her face.

"I was so lonely!" she gasped.

At last the scene he had been flattering himself that he had escaped! The widow in tears! The old situation!

"Naturally! Of course, of course! I quite understand," he said, with a certain dryness.

"No, you do *not* understand!" came suddenly from the young widow, sitting up facing him, the tears running frankly down her face. The words came in a passionate rush, and she struck the arms of the chair with clenched hands.

"No one ever comes to me except to talk about money, money, money! To own all those hideous millions of father's and of Mr. Hatchett's, and yet to be alone, always alone, year after year. To be driven to a—to popping corn for companionship, in a great city of human beings like this! It may seem funny to you—it is killing me, that's all! I'm starving slowly to death for friends; for just a little companionship, for some one to come to me and talk to me of something besides copper, stocks, dividends! Just now when you came, I recognized your name, and I said: 'Ah, he has come as my husband's old friend, and we can talk of this wonderful life here. He will let me tell him what I want, what I need; books, pictures, music and people—all that mother and I used to be so hungry for out at the mines. And perhaps he will let me meet his wife, and I can have a friend!' That's what I thought, what I hoped."

Sands murmured something indistinctly. She hurried on, the flood-gates burst asunder at last:

"I have never had a friend except dear old Jane Hedge, since mother died. She and father would not let me know the women out there at the mines—mother was so different. She had been a school-teacher, and she educated me. She was an invalid for years, and father was always going to San Francisco and to Mexico. Miss Hedge lived

with us. She was mother's nurse and stayed—afterward.

"There are a great many men out there. They used to come to talk business with father. But Miss Hedge and I found out that all the educated, interesting ones were wicked; and the others were—queer.

"Then, when poor father was killed in that railway accident, you know, Uncle Jonah—I mean, Mr. Hatchett! It's so hard to remember, for I have called him 'Uncle Jonah' all my life—Mr. Hatchett came all the way out from the East to see me. I was so glad to see him! He had always been so good to me, and sent me the new books and magazines and wonderful photographs, and when I was a little bit of a girl he always used to say he'd take me to Europe some day, if I'd hurry up and grow fast.

"I was so glad to see him when he came! And so when he offered to show me the beautiful things in the world that mother and I used to talk about, I talked it over with Miss Hedge, and she said I ought to be very grateful. And so we were married and started East together. And then he died in St. Louis suddenly. They told me it was the brain.

"I don't seem to remember what happened for several days. Then I realized Mr. Spinott was there, and doing everything for me; and he said Miss Hedge was sorry but she could not come. She has told me since that it was not true. They kept the news from her until she got my second telegram.

"And so, to get away from—that man, I came on alone—slipped away at midnight; and because my trunks had already been sent on here, I followed them. I did not know what else to do; and I'm waiting for her, for Miss Hedge. She had to go back to close up the house and store things. But the rooms here are so big, and the ceilings so high, and he is not here to help me meet people as he promised.

"He was so kind, I miss him so! Everybody else on earth seems to have friends. I can see them coming and going, laughing, talking, walking, dri-

ving in twos and threes, always in twos and threes, but nobody cares for me, standing in my window watching and longing to be one of them!

"Oh, and then these terrible evenings! I read till the words don't mean anything any more; and I've tried to sing as I used to out at the mines. Mother used to like my singing, and so did Miss Hedge. But singing has to come from something big in the heart, and I am just lonely. Loneliness isn't big somehow, it's just feeling sorry for oneself, you know. Mother used to say that the small emotions have only ourselves as the object; the big ones are connected with other people—like hatred, or jealousy, or revenge; or sacrifice, devotion or love. So that's why I could not sing, you see."

The young widow had talked herself into a sort of peace, her voice was once more quiet as she said the last words.

It darted through Jack's mind that he had at last come around through devious paths to his beloved second act of "Tristan and Isolde" after all!

There was a lump in his throat as he said gently, standing beside her, looking down at the fire:

"I know what loneliness is, too."

"Then you don't live here?"

"Oh, yes, I live here and know about six hundred of the four millions."

"Then perhaps your wife is—not living?" she questioned softly.

"I have never married."

He turned his face and caught her big blue eyes wandering frankly over his sparse gray hair, and he laughed outright. She certainly was the veriest child. He could imagine how her naïveté and innocence must have appealed to that honest old sinner, Hatchett!

"Yes, you're right. It's quite time, isn't it?" There was a pause, and then, in a sudden rush of pity and friendliness, he added lightly:

"May I use your telephone for a moment?"

"Why, yes, of course!"

"I know where it is," he replied, going out into the back-hall. He called up the house of a certain popular so-

ciety dame, and said to her maid that she must tell her mistress when they all got back from the opera that he had been unavoidably detained on important business and had not been able either to join her for the second act, or to make one of her supper-party. Then he went back to the little widow and said—he, “Jack Frost,” as his set had taken to calling him of late, said, quite as if he were once more a boy:

“I simply adore pop-corn. Will you make me some, fresh? Must have it perfectly fresh!”

And while he watched her flying about in a pretty flutter of hospitality, he kept saying to himself: “Behold your dreaded call of condolence! Behold your scene of solemn sapience as steward of many millions!”

In three minutes the owner of aforesaid millions was seated on a low stool before the fire, and the tiny dull explosions from the popper sounded quite cheerily.

“You must have the plate and salt ready the second it’s done,” she ordered, her serious eyes intent on her task.

Such a baby as she was! And by the eternal gods, such a pretty baby, and dead in earnest as babies are! Sands leaned forward, his hands on his knees, a prey to a sort of pleased amazement, and he devoured pop-corn until he knew exactly how the seven mouths of the Nile feel at the end of February.

There was not a single sin of the several he had committed that would have brought the blood to his cheeks as did the fact that when he glanced up at the baroque bronze clock on the mantel he discovered that he had been there exactly three hours, less one quarter!

When he arose to take his leave, he said:

“I wish you’d let my sisters call on you, will you? They are both married and have homes of their own. I live at the club and so can’t do very much for you, you see.”

“Oh, thank you!” she cried, and her eyes had a look in them that once more brought that feeling of constriction in his throat.

The girls should be made to come, by heavens! And be good to the little thing, too, or he’d know why!

Then the absurdity of it all made him turn at the door and say with a certain harshness:

“Why, Mrs. Hatchett, is it possible that you don’t know the enormous power that all this money of yours gives you? The idea of your thanking any one for wishing to know you! Just wait—you’ll see!”

“I only know what it *hasn’t* bought for me! I only know to what I am reduced—that!” she said, pointing to the pop-corn popper, propped against the imitation marble mantelpiece.

“Am reduced?” he reproached.

“Was!” she cried, smiling.

Then he went away, and the sharp reaction took place, usual after a conventional man has been beguiled out of beaten paths.

This thin coating of ice lasted until the next time he saw her, after Spinott’s arrival, when Sands discovered to his own satisfaction that the Montana man was bent on two things: marrying the widow, for he was mad about her, and securing control of the great copper-mine, Rattlesnake Consolidated, by possessing himself of her stock in it.

“She’ll see to it that he doesn’t do the former, and Sands and Company that he doesn’t accomplish the latter,” chuckled Jack to himself, finding himself wonderfully interested in the whole affair; and with a growing longing to hammer J. I. Spinott’s handsome countenance into something less shapely. But instead the two men fought it out in the modern way with their wits.

It was in Sands’ private office, and they sat about six feet apart during most of the combat. Sands had for one week been making use of all the resources known in the business world of to-day, and felt fully ready for the impending fight, when Spinott’s card came into him.

He began by keeping the Western man waiting beside him just those three minutes that convey an impression of the insolence of assured power in the commercial world.

Within five minutes the two had clinched. Spinott was tall, broad-shouldered, a handsome man after a flashy fashion, with hair that looked like black lacquer. He was dressed in a new frock coat albeit it was ten in the morning, a probable concession to Eastern effeteness. Sands was short and blond and dapper, and appallingly sure about things.

He said sharply, with no preliminaries:

"Mr. Spinott, you are short some forty thousand shares of Rattlesnake Consolidated."

And then Spinott told him it was none of his profane business whether he was or not, and the battle began.

And when it was over, the big man in a frock coat, with a white face and glossy black hair, signed his name twice and then went to the door. With his hand still on the door-knob, he hissed over his shoulders:

"Butte City will reach me, for the wedding-cards, damn you!" And Sands was left staring at the closed door.

That night he went to see the widow to tell her all about it, but she was dining—very quietly, of course—with his sister, Sara. And the following nights of that week he himself had engagements. But the next time he called her up on the telephone, he found she was dining with his sister, Adah. His third attempt at seeing the widow was rewarded by finding her at home, to be sure, but he discovered all of his immediate relations, including his father—a widower and, as the "street" put it, "a dead game sport, if ever there was one!"—crowding about the slight, girlish, pretty creature in black, with her eager eyes and wonderful golden hair. The girls had elected to be "good" to her without Jack's threats of settling with them. In fact, before the month was out, he wished to thunder they had chosen to be a little less assertive in their "goodness."

"Rather pretty," you blind idiot?" they had screamed at him in duet after their first call upon Mrs. Hatchett. "No wonder people call you 'Gelid

Jack' and 'Jack Frost.' Why, she's a raving, tearing beauty; all she wants is clothes. Just give us six weeks!"

"All the men in town, who are free, will be mad to marry her," ended Adah, who was pretty.

"Especially those who are not free," quoth Sara, who was plain.

But finally a night came when Sands managed to find the widow at home and alone. It had got to be a standing joke between them, as the weeks flew by.

It was the first warm day that spring, and she was in white and looked about fifteen. She listened attentively while he recounted the latest news from "the enemy," as they called Spinott. But the moment he began to talk business she refused flatly to listen to one word more, telling him that the beloved Miss Hedge had come that day, and nothing would do but he must go up to Jonah Hatchett's den on the second floor and see her. She turned out to be rather old, and very tired, and her grim abruptness hid her shyness from casual eyes. She was tense with long repression, as are wont to be women who have never lived any lives of their own. As Sands sat down beside her sofa, pretending to a devouring interest in her nervous headache, he chuckled to think what Adah and Sara would have said if they could have seen him. But Rose was radiantly happy at her coming.

A little later, when they had gone back to the rejuvenated drawing-rooms, Sands remarked, a little sadly:

"Well, that much-abused money of yours has brought you what you wanted, after all, hasn't it?"

"No, it hasn't," she cried. "It was the pop-corn popper brought me what I wanted."

And Jack was absurdly pleased, and asked a little huskily:

"And I? Don't I come in there anywhere? I—I kicked over the corn popper, anyhow!"

"Oh, you! Why, you are my Columbus—I mean—," And then she stopped and looked away shyly.

Then naturally he said something about his New World. And suddenly

he went blind and dumb with happiness, and then afraid and very humble, and he saw life through a golden web, fine and soft as a woman's hair, floating in the summer wind. And he awoke from the spell to find that he and the widow of Jonah Hatchett were engaged to be married!

About a year later there was a quiet

church wedding at which the bride, being a widow, wore a wonderful "going-away" gown and hat of mauve, and at her throat was a single ornament—"the gift of the groom." It was a brooch in the shape of a tiny gold pop-corn popper, half full of loose pearls—and neither of them would explain the ridiculous thing.




THE DREAM CHILD

THROUGH all the lovely summer day,
Like busy honey-bees,
My little girls around me play
And swarm upon my knees;
But when the twilight hour is o'er
And weary eyelids meet;
Along the silent nursery floor
I hear your boyish feet,
My Child of Dreams! The son I never bore!

And now, while winking fireflies aid
The moon to light the skies;
While peacefully each little maid
In night-long slumber lies;
Alive the empty play-room seems
With merry rolling drums,
And, laughing, down the moon's soft beams
My tiny warrior comes!
My Fairy Prince! My Darling Son of Dreams!


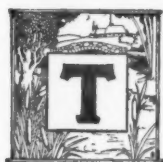
Oh! Lonely moments I shall find
Who now am greatly blessed;
For youthful wings must try the wind;
The birds must leave the nest.
But though my house of doll and toy
May long have been bereft,
At night your eager shouts of joy
Will prove my son is left!
My Dearest Child! My little Dreamland Boy!

RHODA HERO DUNN.



CLOTHES AND THE MAN

By
Camillus Phillips

THE star, serenely grand, perceived Marcel there, as usual, when he reached the stage-door; and his nod of acknowledgment, compelled by the unwritten law of the profession, carried the touch of irony which was the star's most effective bit of byplay. Marcel realized afresh how the personage chafed under the insistence with which one who played the part of a gentleman of no importance, at a salary of no consequence, basked in the glory of his exit from the Chatterton. And Marcel, Spartan in his fortitude, flung his usual hasty "s'long" to the doorkeeper and stepped into the real world at the star's very heel. It was the utmost he could do, off the stage, to draw attention to himself; he did it as those do who inch onward, with foot and shoulder, quietly, amid the surging of a crowd.

The matinée devotees were waiting, rapturous. The star drew their longing gaze; but Marcel's tall form and faultless street attire caught the glint of quick, comprehending glances which said: "One of the company!" Some of them, perhaps, would study the treasured programs and identify him with his modest rôle. To him, they were so many sand grains, with one or two among them who might—some time, somehow—drift into a foundation for the fleeting fame of the stage. He, like the star, walked serene, grand—and, like the star, played at being absorbed in his own effulgence. That

was why, always, when he came from the theater, he discerned no face among the scores that confronted him. Exceedingly good form was Marcel, as the stage defines its attitudes.

Now, what there is in twenty-five which makes it see when it should be blind; what there is in youth which draws down its look when it should aspire to heaven's dome; I will not pretend to understand. The simple fact is that Marcel as he passed—the wagon of his irking obscurity hitched to the Phœbus glory of his star—found himself staring directly into a face that timidly verged the throng. A child's face, a woman's face—he could not tell which; but a face so flowerlike yet so passionate, so dusky in its coloring yet so warmly vivid in the lambent blackness of its great, long-lashed eyes and in the crisp curling of the abundant hair, with such exquisite tints of cheek and mouth, that he half-halted, breathing deeply in the wonder of its loveliness, quivering under its Orient splendor.

She turned, in half-hearted pursuit of the star. Marcel, with the swift twinge of pity and contempt we spare to the dazzled moth, went on his admirable way, wearing, among the thousands of poseurs who drifted past, his particular pose of precise elegance. A few steps, and a hand touched his arm, while the radiance of the great eyes, so near to him, set him trembling in the chill of a strange ecstasy.

"Please excuse me, sir," she was saying, her voice sounding the deep bell-tone which, heard so rarely, invariably

thrilled him in that spot the Greeks held for the home of the soul. "May I ask you something?"

He knew, with an instant conviction, that she was no idol-worshiper in specious quest of acquaintances. He paid her the tribute of the simple, direct reply:

"Yes. What is it?"

Her hardihood failed her, as though she had exhausted her store of courage in the bold venture of addressing him.

"I—I—" she hesitated. "I was going to speak to him." And the awe in her voice capitalized the word as no bill-board could have displayed it. "But—at the last minute—I was afraid. I—I want to go on the stage; and—I thought, perhaps, if some one in the company would speak for me—"

There was in Marcel De Bonair—christened Mark Luke Debbony, son of Luke and Elizabeth Debbony, of Pottstown, Pennsylvania—the flint of a resolution which his constant exercise in self-control was bringing nearer to the surface, ready to his hand in the countless, quaint emergencies of the profession he was bent upon. Powerful as was the lure the girl's beauty flung about him, swiftly and surely as his mind foresaw a vantage-ground which would be his as her sponsor, his whole trained being rejected the temptation her ignorance offered. And, it may be, the very essence of the charm that appealed to him, and the surprised reverence which was part of the chill that still thrall'd him in its keen delight, impelled him to the heights men reach in abnegation.

"How old are you?" he asked; and felt a safety in the dawning sense of her protection.

She told him—eighteen. Her name was Meier, Sarah Meier. She lived, alone with her father—Immanuel Meier, the capped and bearded tailor—above the little, lost doorway on Broadway, near Twenty-third Street, where the old man could be seen, from dawn until long after dark, indefatigable in the entry he had made his tiny store. All day long, jalousied in the room above, while the drawing world swept

past her hungry eyes, she sewed and pressed and cooked and cleaned—house-keeper, bushelman, seamstress, almost tailor, all in one. After the melting of the evening throng, when there remained few to note "Immanuel Meier, Fashion Tailor. Trousers, \$4. Repairing Done Neatly," as illuminated on the glass of the door by the bulb that was his working-light, her father came up-stairs. They sewed until midnight, and were up before the sun.

It was hurting her. She had coughed, and so went to a hospital. The doctors said she must breathe real air and have some pleasure, or she would die. Out of the hoarded earnings her father gave her twenty-five cents a week; out of the precious daylight he spared her an afternoon. She came from her prison over the lost door and bought, with her bit of silver, day-dreams for her wearied self among the ragamuffins of some gallery or the raw tawdriness of some poor parquet. Did she imagine she could act? Oh, no, far be such pride from her humility! But she was sure she could walk out on the stage and stand there, as other girls did; and—and they were paid better than some models in the department stores.

Marcel, amid the eager outpour of her appeal, which flowed readily enough once she had begun, realized how shrewdly she had descried her fitness for the modest place she sought, and realized how even his small influence might suffice to gain her the employment.

He knew how trivially far he had gone in his profession. For five years he had gained engagements by his clothes. He was the Brummell of the stage, doomed to remain perennially in the bud. All the managers knew him; all had him catalogued. He was their dubiously expensive, picturesquely irreproachable, lay-figure. He had begged, demanded, fought for his chance to show that he could act. They paid him his money, and kept him in his chains. Causeway, of the syndicate, told him once:

"We don't need actors—they're hop-

ping every gutter from Hell Gate to Hammerstein's. Now *you* are a perfect gentleman. You're The Perfect Gentleman. For the sake of the business, don't spoil yourself. We don't want you to do anything. We don't want you to say anything. We pay you to simply look something. And that's all we will pay you for."

It was little more than the "walking gent" of an earlier day, yet it might serve her turn. As his own mischances flashed in discouraging review, Marcel's memory projected, too, some shadows of the tragedies which had befallen women he recalled; and he knew the cruelty of helping her to her desire.

They were close to Twenty-third Street. As he regarded her anew, intent upon his kind denial, her vivid beauty smote into him a longing that seemed to sway him with a physical weakness. The flint that was Mark Debbony barely sufficed to force Marcel De Bonair into saying:

"I will talk this over with your father."

She turned upon him, wide-eyed in her fear:

"Oh, please, *please* don't! If he even saw me with a man——"

He divined something of the iron rule governing the transplanted European households; and he felt it was her one safeguard.

"Now," he observed, with the calmness of a man who recognizes the patent fact, "I can't force you to come with me to your father. But I can give you the choice of being present while I speak to him or of going home alone to him, after I have seen him. Which will you take?"

The tears that brimmed her eyes daunted, while their soft appeal resolved him. He crossed in the direction of the shop; and he found her at his side, her head held high with a fine courage that stung him into new admiration.

"You are a good, brave girl!" he said to her, as they neared the door. "I am sorry I must do what I am doing."

She answered so simply and so sadly, "You don't know what you are do-

ing," that she gave him pause. But the alert gaze of the old man within the door, hawklike for possible customers, had recognized her. He turned the knob. She followed him; and she stood, her hands clasped before her, in an attitude which was wholly of the Old World—the prisoner, submissive to sentence.

"Mr. Meier," said Marcel, fixing his regard steadily on the alarmed, rapidly shifting eyes of the old man, "I am Mr. De Bonair, of the Chatterton Theater Company. Your daughter asked me a few minutes ago to get her a place on the stage. She tells me she is breaking down under the close confinement here; and she thinks, with a great deal of truth, that she might be able to secure some minor part in the theater and earn enough to support herself. It seems she feared you would object. So did I, when she told me her story. I came here to say to you, and to her in your presence, that she is too beautiful, and too innocent, to risk the dangers of the theater. As her father, you owe a duty to her soul as well as to her body. Get her some employment where her health will not suffer, and be sure it is one which does not endanger her morals."

Meier rose, effusive.

"T'ank you, sir, chentelmans! T'ank you, chentelmans. *Ach, mein Gott*, der t'eayter in she vould go, *hein?* I lick her goot—yes, sir, I lick her goot, dill she all ofer plue plack iss. T'ank you, sir."

Marcel looked at the silent, stoical figure; and her loveliness seized upon him like wreathing arms.

"Why, you beastly old slave-driver," he exclaimed, in the quick heat of his indignation, "if you dare whip that girl I'll come here and whale you so badly you'll never get off your tailor's table."

The old man quailed with the shrinking of generations of oppression; and answered with the slow sullenness of his acquired citizenship:

"She iss my girls, yess? For vy should I nod lick her, *hein?*"

Marcel felt sharply the folly of dispute. If she chose to endure it—and

the steadfast poise of her classic head smote him with its wordless reproach—what, indeed, could he do? He sensed his nearness to a way of life, to some world-old conditions, which he could not divine and subtly dreaded to defy. He took refuge in a threat inspired by his shrewdness, instead of his anger.

"She is your daughter; and I suppose you can kill her by inches, or by yards, if she will let you. But I tell you now, if you do lay a hand on her, and she comes again to me, you lose her."

He raised his hat to her with his courtliest bow.

"Forgive me. And, if you need me, remember the name, De Bonair."

But she did not look at him; and he passed out, knowing that she feared, by so much as a glance of acknowledgment, to increase her father's wrath.

The adventure lay upon his mind, one of those impressions which remain the more alive for every effort to banish them. And, too, there was a tang of joy in the thought of her that left him apprehensive of himself and impelled him to merge her hastily in with the commonplace. He told Zeller, the manager, that night, of the beauty the company had forfeited, less for gossip than to reduce the affair, in his own mind, to the proportions of an incident of the business. And Zeller, grinning his wry, knowing grin, observed:

"A-a-ah, the pure Marcel! She must be the Circassian princess. When she comes let me see her."

Two nights later, as he changed for the second act, the call-boy bawled into the room: "Loidy fur Mr. Deeboneer!" He went out to her, where she waited, shielded from the draft of the stage-door.

"He's beaten me—he's beaten me!" she panted, in a passion of appeal. "Oh, I couldn't tell you—I couldn't tell any one, before. But he often whipped me. And now, he's kept his word; he beat me black and blue. I won't stand it! I won't! I won't!"

Marcel flared, hot with fresh anger.

"I'll go down to that miserable hole

in the wall and punch his beard through the back of his neck—the old brute!"

She drew back from him in a horror which awoke his former sense of helpless ignorance.

"You—you should strike my father! Don't you dare talk of hurting him. He has a right to whip me—of course, he has a right. B—b—but I can't stand it any more."

"Well, what in the name of Heaven can I do for you, then?" demanded Marcel.

She put her hand upon his sleeve—half-child, half-woman, appealing to him with a force she herself could not estimate.

"Just get me a place here. I'll fix it, then, with my father."

Marcel, the touch of her hand confusing him and the lure of her eyes blinding him, heard faintly the call for the second act. He stood silent; then, in a quick return to himself, comprehended that he dare not delay there, with her.

He told her, "Come, quickly," and hastened to where he had seen Zeller chatting with a friend behind the scenes. The manager was still there.

"Mr. Zeller," Marcel explained briefly, "this is Miss Meier, the young lady I told you of. You can decide whether I made a mistake about her fitness for the work."

He left her with the manager, carrying with him the memory of the admiration which lit the first look of Zeller's eyes. She met him, as he came off the stage, with the shy, joyous whisper:

"He took me—he took me! Two jobs—fifteen dollars on the stage, and five helping on costume work for the next play, because I'm an expert. Oh, I'm so happy; and I thank you so much, Good night!"

She came down from the costume-room, to the morning rehearsal, with such a flush of happiness upon her cheek that Marcel ceased to blame himself for giving her the chance of fire after the frying-pan of her domestic sweat-shop. For the better part of night and morning he had been deba-

ting a protest to Zeller against the permission accorded her to put in, for the pitiful five dollars extra, those precious hours of her day amid the dust of the great sewing-room. The knowledge that the continuous occupation was her most effective safeguard was all that had deterred him.

Now, as she gave him her hand in grateful, timid greeting, he told himself he would wait and study how she bore the strain of the two employments.

"I could not tell my father yet," she said, as a child may speak to the guardian it confides in. "He is too angry with me. I just slipped out, so as to be on time."

She found her place, and did her small office as a shifting human detail in the scenic effects with a directness of intelligence which elicited from the captious stage-manager "Good stick, Bonair" — a commendation which pleased Marcel and yet vaguely chafed him, as implying that he had a more personal interest in her than he would confess. However, he reflected, it meant definite acceptance of her for the salary-list; what difference what they thought?

Then suddenly, upon the taut quietness of the rehearsal, broke tumult. A detective, a policeman and Immanuel Meier invaded the stage, the law with the solemn majesty of warrant duly sworn, the father in the shrieking ire of paternity bereft.

"*Meine tochter*—my Sarah!" he wailed. "She iss here, der tief mid. Ar-r-rest him—der kitnapper vich svears me to gripple for life."

The people of the company clustered, in gay delight, about him. Briefly and sternly the detective explained. Marcel, arrested as John Doe Bonner, must answer the charge of kidnapping; and the old man's daughter must be restored to him on the spot.

Sarah went to her father calmly.

"Father," she said, "I came here myself because you beat me. I will go back with you if you say so. But I am getting twenty dollars a week. If I come to you now we shall lose money."

A beatific peace stilled the old man's

agitated beard and quieted his frantic hands.

"Vat—dventy dollars!" He stood in rapt marveling. "So—o—oh!"

He emerged, benign, from the golden trance.

"Sarah, you iss goot girls. Vere iss Mr. Doponner? Oh, t'ank you, sir, chentelmans! Sarah, you pe home to-nite to git der supper!"

Detective and policeman looked at each other and guffawed. The company, in chorus, laughed the full, echoing, malicious laugh of the stage. And first one, then another, until all swung to the spirit of it, called after the sordid figure, fleeing in terror lest he lose her the place:

"Ah, *Shylock*! My ducats, my daughter! My daughter, my ducats! Ah, *Shylock*!"

It was Marcel, his anxious glance smitten by the red shame on the girl's face, who called the decent halt.

"Ladies and gentlemen, let us remember that *Jessica* loved her father."

The girl did not recognize the allusion; but she did understand the instant cessation of the mockery, and she grasped the significance of the laughing "*Good Antonio*!" "*De Bonair, Squire of Dames*!" "All right, Marcel; she's yours!" And she ran from stage to costume-room, while Marcel stood there, conscious of a public linking with his protégée which, in the privacy of his own heart, he was irritably denying.

"Marcel's girl," they called her, as the weeks wore on, while, fearful for himself, fearful for her, he regularly took her home after the performance, to bid her a grave, kind "Good night" at the lost doorway on Broadway. He gave her father an order for a frock coat, at an absurdly low price, and received a garment which was considered to mark an era in the sartorial progress of the profession. He fell into the habit of chatting with the old man, and discerned the genius for clothes which lay, nascent, under the cobbler of old duds.

With no admitted willingness on his part beyond his desire to give her the protection he felt he owed her beauty

and her innocence, he found himself identified with her and her interests. It was he to whom Zeller remarked: "If she could act only a little bit, that girl of yours would make a top-liner." No man in the company chatted with her, unless he made ironical apology to Marcel. His very lounging acquaintances referred sometimes to his beautiful prize, and advised him sagely against marriage, in or out of "the business." And all the while Marcel knew he had not used his opportunities to so much as press her hand at their simple, friendly partings.

The season ended, with Sarah in steady employment on costume work and Marcel possessed of savings to tide over the summer. But, with the approach of fall, he confronted a harsh fortune that was strange to him, although common enough to actors of his modest standing. There seemed no engagement open; and there proved to be no engagement for him, until the fall really came and real poverty came with it. He cast about, plodded and pleaded, planned and pawned—did what his fellows do; and then took stock of himself. And he decided, in his rigid self-examination, the managers must be right; he was a good tailor's dummy, and a bad actor.

He gave a day to a friend who knew chemistry, and learned of some salts which, in combination, produced a vapor resembling heavy steam. He gave a week to literary composition; and his muse produced a twenty-minute comedietta calling for a fashionable samovar, a fashionable hostess, and an ultrafashionable caller—too scrupulously polite to tell her that her treasured samovar was dripping boiling water on his patient legs—who should be an imitation of Sothern, a burlesque of Hackett, a travesty of Drew, and a delicate exaggeration of himself. Then he asked Sarah whether she cared to try the vaudeville circuit with him.

It was her father who objected. Released from the immurement of her home, Sarah's beauty had flushed to a swift ripening. It was inevitable that she should reap admiration; at the thea-

ter, on the street, wherever she passed and men were. The tiny shop gained by it. Old Meier, already endowed with a flying-fingered sewing-woman, talked of having a real "pushilmans" and of being real "merchant dailors." He was wont, now, to look askance at Marcel, and he told Sarah she need only wait; she should have a dowry. He protested that her wages in the costume-room were too large, and too well assured, to be risked in any such dubious venture. And, all the while, Marcel surmised that he feared their intimate association.

Marcel, too, feared as he longed for it; yet the longing had long since overpassed the fear. He knew, from the night when their homeward walk was to be no more their quiet routine, that he loved her—knew that his first, thrilled contact with the marvel of her beauty had burned ineffaceably upon him the seal of the one romance that could come into his life. He hungered to own some memories of her, to glean some treasures of recollection with which she could invest the stage that, for obscurity or for distinction, must always bound his being.

As, in the beginning, he had put away the thought that he could desire her, now he felt he must put away the hope that she would care for him. He had come to understand what filial piety could mean among this alien people; he saw how he confronted, in the bent, obsequious workman, a pride rooted in the deepest clay of race; he detected, with the nice, fine sense of the artist that was in him, an acid reserve past which he might never go; and he knew that Immanuel Meier, Fashion Tailor, would rather marry his daughter to his "pushilmans" than to the exquisite to whom he scraped his solicitous, almost cringing, bow.

Yet it was not her father's covert, or even open opposition that Marcel dreaded; he was too much the American to disbelieve wholly the blessed American doctrine that love laughs at parents. It was Sarah herself. She seemed, in her quick accession to her womanhood, to hark back, with a bitter

abasement, to the sordid squalor of the life which had compelled her first appeal; and she appeared resolved—gently, kindly, almost tenderly—to entrench herself within a pride which, she designed, should forever hold him from her heart. Marcel fancied he could foresee her, married to some man of wealth, wince if she should ever encounter him amid the luxury and the refinements she would know for her true environment; and he had already made his quiet vow to spare her the pain. But now, now, he did want her, just for the little time—near him, with him—workfellow, companion, rose of life's enchantment, woman whom he loved and should never hold in real embrace.

She consented—eagerly, gratefully, happily—earnest, he told himself in hard reminder, to hide from him the cruel truth that she was glad to repay her debt. She dominated her father, as before, with a calm statement of the business advantage; if, as a "team," they could secure an engagement, they need accept no less than seventy-five dollars per week, and her share would be half. She could always return to the costume-work.

They rehearsed in the room above the shop, at night, with the solemn family samovar, ravished from its dignity of high days and holidays, spurting spurious steam, while the old man bobbed over his thread and flicked, from time to time, a wary glance beyond the tangle of his beard.

Marcel wondered at the facility with which she grasped his directions; the breeding, the small delicacies of the woman of position, seemed to have been born in her. He wondered, even more, at the spirit, the dash, the verve, she displayed, and at the sureness of insight with which she improvised touches of manner and commanded shades of tone, such as he had seen actresses of reputation beat out by main strength in imitation of their teachers.

He found himself surprised as well at the manner in which his own more difficult part, as distinguished from his travesties of the popular favorites that introduced it, burgeoned into a living,

brilliant type, full of effects which he recognized as belonging to the best work of high comedy. It was as though all his observation, study, fancy, thought, had lain fallow for the spring-time; or—and there, his long habit of discouragement assured him, was the reason—as though he were proving the old saw, that the teacher learns with the pupil. He told her that, modestly, sincerely, when she exclaimed in admiration of some fresh byplay or some convincing trick of gesture.

It was his forlorn hope. It won the frequent fortune of bold despair. They secured an engagement and, for a week in Boston and a week in Philadelphia, he had the first, rich joy of his profession in applause that was honestly his; and he had the exquisite suffering of the lover whose love is at his side while his goal is stern renunciation.

He was amazed at her talent; and he had the daily verdict of the public to endorse his enthusiasm. His resolve was made when they returned to New York for the appearances of their third week. He sought out Causeway, the syndicate dictator, and begged him to spare a fraction of some afternoon or evening to judge her.

"Your girl?" answered Causeway, smiling. "Such disinterestedness—"

There was a note at the theater for him three days afterward, bidding him to the syndicate offices.

Causeway spoke with directness:

"I had heard of your work from Philadelphia; our man there thought better of you than he did of Miss Meier. Our English truck, 'Wasps,' isn't making good at the Booth. We're going to put on, for just one week, a magnificent new comedy, by Minford. We were holding it for next year, for the opening of the Judy. We'll give it the 'Wasps' datings on the road, bring it back here for a single farewell night at the close of the season, and open the Judy with it next fall for a year's run. It's 'Clothes, and the Man.' We've bribed Rander over from his hatred for the trust; and there's no room among the men for anybody now—if only he'll stay bought. He's behaving like the

Czar of Russia condescending to the Duma. But we do need a good woman—and we don't mind a new discovery. So I went down to see you, night before last. Your girl's good, Bonair. I talked with her yesterday, and offered her a hundred a week. Well, she simply refused. She said she owed you a debt of gratitude; you were holding off starvation with your little act, and she had to stand by the guns."

"And so?" queried Marcel.

"And so, if you really want to help her on to crimson glory and undying fame—and it's in her; I'll say that—and if you really want to break up your own act in vaudeville, you'll have to do the persuading. One thing's certain; Rander has his contract; every part but the woman's lead is filled; and we can't carry any dead wood for the sake of creating a new female wonder of the American stage."

Marcel lied to her, with convincing affirmations upon his lips and, in his heart, the sensation that he was parting from her at last forever. Assured that he would have no trouble in securing some one in her stead, Sarah went blissfully to her apotheosis, and the town heard the praises of the new discovery, while Marcel forfeited his engagement with humble apologies and retired to his cheap Twelfth Street lodgings, to practise hunger privately.

Three weeks went by. Every day, practise seemed to make him less perfect in his lean and bitter rôle. Nor did it appear that he gained in peace of mind by his contemplation of the swift architecture of Sarah's fame. "Clothes, and the Man," was being heralded for production within a fortnight. The managers had adroitly put the press in direct touch with the beautiful debutante. Her own tact was carrying her far beyond the capacities of mere puffery; and the great Rander's name, the star's name, was jogging on, merely incident to the leading rôle. Marcel wondered how the famous expositor of genteel comedy endured the brisk eclipse, and envied him the dear propinquity of Sarah.

Whereupon there came to him, in a

letter of two pages from Causeway, high heaven and black purgatory:

DEAR MR. DE BONAIR: It will afford me infinite pleasure if you will accept the leading rôle, *Terwilliger Dassent*, in "Clothes, and the Man," which we produce at the Booth two weeks hence. May I beg you to inform me, at your first opportunity, whether you will consider the part, and whether the salary we have allotted to it—one hundred dollars per week—is sufficient to merit your attention? Most faithfully yours,
ARNOLD CAUSEWAY.

And on the detached sheet, fate's arbiter added:

And look here, Mark Debbony, you want to jump quick and bite hard at this fly, no matter what you think of the difference between your hundred and Rander's five. He's just played Bull of Bashan over the notices your girl's getting. He swore we roped and tied him to be supe to a child-wonder, bit his cigar into three pieces, kicked Schoenblaetter in the abdomen, and tore up his contract. So that settles Rander. Now, you've never peeped higher than forty dollars per; and you know it. There's eleven changes for the elegant *Terwilliger* in his three acts; and he's got to be *IT*, as the French plate-glass of fashion and the sterling silver mold of form. If you can't deliver the goods—eleven changes, from hats to spats—on one hundred dollars per for a twenty-six-week season, phone me d. q., and I'll shake a dummy out of the deck who can. I've written the real thing here, so that you can use my politenesses to prove you've had an offer of one hundred dollars, even, if you can't earn it. After this, don't say, like the rest of the profesh, that I'm a heartless syndicate shark.

It was the breaking blow. Marcel, one moment in Elysium, the next in despair, leaned back in the worn chair of his beggarly lodgings, and let the hot tears come. What man but the cynical, saturnine Causeway could have devised such an exquisite tantalism? Causeway, who was indebted to him for that *rara avis*, an actress with genius in the flower of her girlhood; Causeway, whose motto was "business is business"; Causeway, who knew he was penniless and could as readily conjure the thousand dollars in cash or credit, requisite for his costumes, as he could pick the pocket of a Rockefeller? And the demand for instant decision! Oh, if there were only some way to solve it—some turn, some twist of loan

or of instalment! The sum was too great, the security too uncertain.

II.

To carry the leading rôle, practically a star part, at a house such as the Booth, in such a play as Minford's "Clothes, and the Man"—it extended the accolade of the profession. Marcel, in the candid solitude of his small bare bedroom, groaned with the galled misery of his leashed ambition. For lack of the slender capital he might so readily have saved, had Causeway or any other tyrant of the domineering crew ever allowed him more than the pinching pittance of his beggary—why, six months hence, with such a character as he could fashion out of *Terwilliger Dassent*, out of any part that so much as let him open his mouth and move at will before the footlights, he could fling their doling parsimony back in their mincing teeth.

And with Sarah to inspire him! What if it must be another, more bitterly chill foretaste of Dante's seventh hell? She, who had seen him so speedily stripped of the complacent, sham prosperity which is the costly asset of the player—ah, she might have beheld him in a rôle that would have more than atoned for his abasement!

And instant answer—Causeway must have his taunting gibe humbly truckled to on the spot, must he? Well, Rander had shown how a man should answer them. Oh, Causeway should have his answer; and he would not be fit to shake out another dummy—

Some one was knocking at his rattling door. "You're wanted, down in the hall," the voice of the house sloven called through to him.

With the deftness of the stage—a touch of kerchief, a fierce behesting of his mobile features—he swept his misery from his face and, seizing hat and top-coat, descended. And Sarah, plumed and preened in bright array of fashion, a jewel of fire and beauty glowing amid the dim grime of the entry-way below, discerned his trouble as rapidly as an older actress, more deeply versed in the mysteries of make-up.

"Oh, Marcel," she pitied, "you've been crying. Didn't you get Causeway's letter?"

"I got it," he gritted bitterly. "It took Causeway to poison a bouquet."

"Why," in astonishment, "hasn't he offered you the lead at one hundred per week?"

"Oh, yes—twenty-six hundred for the season, with a thousand dollars to be spent, out of thirteen dollars and sixty-four cents, between now and the first performance."

"Marcel," she said, with a little laugh of apologetic pride, "come with me—in my cab." And, as he stared: "Ah, I have a cab. Don't you know a hundred dollars a week can be discounted?"

He crossed the pavement with her and they entered the cab. She told the man to drive to her father's shop; and she turned to Marcel.

"Now," she announced gaily, "if you need somebody to blame, blame me. Causeway was in despair over the loss of his lead. He saw himself paying double to one of the grand stars to retrieve the fiasco. I flew at him. I told him it was a deliverance instead of a misfortune. With a new play and a new actress he was amply strong enough for this season. If he used a great star, now, for the lead, he would have nothing left for the opening of the Judy next fall. 'Oh,' he said, 'these infants. Watch them teach us grandmothers to suck eggs.' But he told me to go on. I reminded him of you, and showed him how he might save ten thousand on the season. But he refused. Before Rander, perhaps, a new man might have passed; but after Rander, only some one twice as famous would do—even, he said, with a wonderful débutante to help out. 'Oh, no, Mr. Causeway,' I answered, 'without the débutante.' Then his eyes grew narrow and he looked as if he wanted to hit me. But he only said: 'Pull devil, pull baker. Well—ah—baker, what is it?' I said it was De Bonair and Meier, or sewing costumes for Meier, instead of wearing them. He smiled in his mocking way; and he said: 'Marcel pays for his own clothes.' Oh, it was

pull devil, pull baker, truly; but I had won. So I gave a last tug to make sure. 'You pay for his dresser.' And he laughed, right out, like a man who enjoys being hit by some child who can't hurt him, while he said: 'Good baker—good girl. I promise him a man.' Oh, Marcel, Marcel, don't refuse! Causeway likes you, values you, wants you. But he is a business man. He knew, as I knew, that you ought to jump at the offer. It isn't the skimmed salary, badly as you need it. It is your chance at last. And—Marcel—it is my chance at last. For nearly a year I've been dreaming of accomplishing something like this for you."

"Oh!" Marcel hastily turned his face to the window of the cab to conceal the pain she had dealt him.

In the midst of his admiration at the manner in which this girl, by sheer instinct for affairs, had met and matched the dreaded tyrant of their subject world, a hope, new-born, had been lilted in his soul that she had done this thing for love of him. She was so naively happy, so openly rejoiced. And, after all, it was cold gratitude—the calculated payment of her debt.

She was speaking to him, but he did not hear her. He was trying, in his turmoil of bitterness and chagrin, to phrase some formal thanks which should not be too brutal in their rejection of her aid. He could not. He felt that anything less than acquiescence must wound her. And he shrank from pain to her with a quiver of his whole, suffering spirit. With the transition of his mood, he began to catch her pleading words.

"Marcel," she was saying—and her tones held something of the timidity which had so softly caressed him when he first heard her bell-like voice—"don't say no. I need you so badly. I struggle with my part in the rehearsals, feeling all the time as though I were some puppet, with a head of wood. The stage-manager professes to be satisfied. But I know, if I must depend on his directions until the performance, and if I face that suspicious, critical audience without you at my side, I shall be a

wretched failure. For my sake, Marcel——"

His nerves were rasping, in a newly poignant discord. How they drain their lovers, these women, who ask all and withhold everything! A bare foothold, and they would fling their dearest friends into the flame of their ambition. Here was the secret of her——

But the pride of his love swung itself erect. He was wronging her—the girl he had taught to lean upon him, the woman whose only fault was eager gratitude. And she needed him. For half a year more, out of his profitless life, she needed his strength, his protection. A pitiful lover, indeed, who would not bear the torture of her luring, forbidden charm until he had done his lover's whole duty in fitting her to discard him.

"Why, Sarah," he replied, with the accent of sincerity possible only for the true actor and the true lover, "I have not thought of refusing. I have been thinking how—how good you are. That was all."

She grew radiant.

"Oh, Marcel, I was sure you would be glad. And now, about your clothes. Do you imagine that I would have taken the bargain if you couldn't——"

But they were at the little shop. Her father, as they entered, looked up in grim, unpleasant recognition of Marcel. Sarah beamed.

"Father," she announced, "Mr. De Bonair has become our leading man at one hundred dollars per week. He has come to you for eleven suits, to be finished within ten days."

Meier gasped, and tried to protest appreciation. But the sudden windfall was too overwhelming. He could only fumble in his beard, and articulate: "Sir—chentelmans—soch chenerousness!"

"And, father," she continued, "Mr. De Bonair's clothes in this play will be the talk of the town. He will tell every one who made them—but he expects that you will give him prices ten per cent. better than you gave on other clothes you made for him; and you are to take payment in ninety days as cash."

"Sarah!" The old man breathed her name in a whisper that reproached her for blackest treason.

But he did not dare a refusal. Sarah, gay directress of the young man's fortunes, turned to him as he stood in dumb humility before her resourcefulness!

"There, Marcel, you see; my father can do as well as your Fifth Avenue tailors. And, for your shoes and hats and other things, wait until you are announced for your part, and order them sent to the theater. Mr. Causeway will have to advance what you need."

The crude prose of the day seemed touched by some fairy wand, which still charmed for him at the syndicate offices, where Causeway signed his contract with a nimbleness that proved how shrewdly he appraised his grudging bargain. But he was all courtesy, all friendliness—with a hinting, even, of that respect which he knew so well is ever art's most prized tribute from base trade. Once they had signed, he volunteered his highest compliment—his attendance to the theater, where Marcel, his study-time being so brief, must at least see the day's rehearsal, with his own part in hand.

Marcel began to comprehend something of the true greatness of this potentate of the stage; and he seemed, for the first time, to perceive the full meaning of that strength for varied combat which underlies the smooth writhe of the modern life. It was as if a specimen of humanity, suddenly projected and magnified, showed him the giant muscles moving in their sure and even play. And he felt that he, at last, had done with rake and broom, and was emerging from the darkness and dirt of the beast-pens, to stand up among the gladiators of the arena.

Causeway sat at his side while the rehearsal progressed, dropping a tactful, appreciative word now and then for some pose of inflection which Sarah, brilliant with the full fire of her young life, cast off in the spontaneity of budding, happy talent. A disturbance in the wings, so sharply reminiscent of old Meier's shrieking irruption into the

Chatterton that it carried Marcel back a leaping year, was followed by the appearance of the tailor himself—as before, frantic with wrath; as before, the vengeful parent.

"Mein Sarah!" he demanded. "Mein chilt—were she iss, here in soch t'eyter von soch vickidnesses?"

Now Sarah herself stood aghast. It was beyond the understanding both of her and of Marcel. She hurried to him. "Why, father!" But he brushed her aside.

"Who der man iss, vich der man iss, vich sdeals mein Sarah for der staiche's vickidnesses?"

Causeway, in the dramatic pause, laughed—a chuckling, appreciative laugh; and he confronted the old man with an easy, amused tolerance.

"Well, Mr. Meier," he smiled, "tell us what you want?"

"A-a-ah, you der chilt-sdealer vos? Oh, mein liddle Sarah!"

"Tut, tut!" moderated Causeway pleasantly. "What is it—how much?"

Virtuous indignation blazed from the depths of old Meier's bearded face.

"How moch? Der dainted moneys for mein chilt! Mein Sarah, oh, mein —"

"Drop it!" commanded Causeway sternly. "Talk business."

A look of temerarious cunning lurked in the ingratiating smile with which Meier drew forth an old theater program. He held it before the manager's face, while he spoke eagerly:

"See—der brocurn! Yot says it, *hein?* Blumming—py Taniel MacKin-niss, *hein?* Eelegdrizidy—py Villyum Koons, *hein?* Gosdumes—py Venz undt Venz, *hein?* Vat? *Mein Gott*, even vos der blay undt der moosic py some-poddies."

Causeway kept his countenance.

"And you want—"

"Oh, sir, chentelmans, I—I haf der gondract for der glodings von Mr. Doponner, der leating man. Sec—it soch liddle ding iss, *hein?* Only so as you brint der line—'Mr. Doponner's gosdumes py Meier, von Nei York.'"

He hung, in trembling terror of refusal, upon Causeway's reply. But the

manager kept him not an instant in his suspense.

"Mr. Meier," he said heartily, "your suggestion is an excellent one, for us as well as for you. It is the advertising Mr. De Bonair's part needs. Yes—" in swift grasp of the uses of idea—"we will carry that line over the whole tour. And Mr. Meier—I am glad to have met you. If you have any more requests like this come to our offices and ask for me."

"Ah, Miss Meier," he exclaimed, as Sarah's father departed, with an unwonted squaring of his bowed shoulders and a firm walk replacing his habitual shuffle. "I knew there must be brains where such a girl came from. Tell your father I meant what I said."

But Marcel, at the sight of her face clearing, under Causeway's firm diplomacy, from her new and deeper humiliation, felt a numbing, chilling sense of a barrier rising, more impassable than he knew before.

He hurled himself into his rôle, making of his work the hard armor which men instinctively don in conquest of spiritual pain. He needed every atom of artistic concentration that was in him. The comedy ended in the climax of a passionate love-scene, where he was required to hold Sarah in his arms, her warm, supple body pressed tightly to him—her very burning cheek laid against his own, until she should bend back her dear, lovely head to receive his kiss. Realism demanded such a simulation, in plain view of the spectators, that only her parted lips of flame, with his like ice between them, could meet the thrilling exigency.

It was nightly anguish. A fair success in New York, "Clothes, and the Man," found the road a series of triumphs, while Marcel's rôle took on the proportions of a *Dundreary* or a *Micawber*. He was already assured of his future; with no flattering unction of mere conceit, he was entitled to aspire to a high career. Sarah, as well, was marked for speedy fame. The very drift of the stage told of syndicate rivals who envied Causeway and his associates their find. And Marcel, who

should have been reaping the joyous fruit of his patient years, put in fourteen out of his seventeen waking hours fighting to kill the love which every night revived with merciless lacerations.

No man and no woman, placed as they were, could have endured the incessant strain with no attempt at a permanent solution, had it not been for the unexpected, forceful injection of his authority into the situation by Sarah's father. Kind, gentle, almost anxiously charming as she consistently was, scrupulous as was Marcel not to trespass beyond the limit of helping comradeship, conscious as both were that the whole, wide profession had come to know the story of their association and regarded them as inseparable, neither could have gone on indefinitely without some word or action precipitating an explanation. Spartan Marcel could be; stoic the woman could remain; but the human soul—and especially those souls which are embodied in the medley of emotion and intellect which so sensitively shrines the artist—knows, always, some limit to its fortitude.

They were in Chicago, when an advertisement appeared in the papers beside the announcement of their play. It was as striking as it was brief. It said only: "Meier, of New York, Cuts the Clothes of De Bonair." Three days later, at his hotel, Marcel encountered a gorgeous salesman, who was taking private orders for the old man among the city's most extravagant youth. Sarah, with a timorous, worried smile, showed him the grim scribble of a postal card, dated from Fifth Avenue, which advised her curtly:

Deer Sarah, you pe goot girls. Ve pe qvik rich. Yur fadder, I. MEIER.

She wrote to him, begging an explanation. He vouchsafed only the assurance that great wealth was coming to them, and bade her remember the obedience due her father. As their cities changed, his crisp advertisements attended them, while the periodical press began to flare with "Meier, of New York, Cuts the Clothes of De Bonair, and of—" with a list of other

actors known for the nicety of their habiliment. Again, some bold-typed card confronted them, in column or on page: "The Mantle of Stoltz Has Fallen on Meier, of New York." There was evidence everywhere that the old, bent workman of the lost doorway on Broadway had come into some Canaan of plenty, the grandeur of which he was reserving for ocular display.

Marcel, in his kindly felicitations, could not wholly eliminate the note of sadness which had come to pervade his habitual thought. And Sarah, he discerned, realized that this fresh factor was certain to modify their relations, even if it should not influence her entire career. Apart from the excitement with which the stage buoys up its votaries, both seemed to taste dust and ashes as the portion of their young and brilliant life.

They were in Philadelphia when Marcel received, from a notoriously astute manager, the tender of a contract for two years, at three hundred dollars per week. He recognized it for what it was—the cachet of final professional approval. He showed it to Sarah; and she handed to him a letter of similar tenor, which she had received from the same source. There was in her a repression of delight that spoke to Marcel volumes of rejoicing and of pride in that, at last, her debt was paid to him in full and that, at last, she felt reliant upon her ability to fare onward alone.

"Shall you accept?" she asked him anxiously.

"It seems only fair to send it to Causeway," Marcel replied. "One owes something to the man who opens the door."

"Ah, don't we?" she rejoined softly. "I thought of doing that, too. I am going to tell my father. Shall I write him about your good luck?"

"I don't believe," said Marcel, striving to withhold the bitterness from his voice, "that it will interest him."

She turned inscrutable.

"Very well. I won't tell him."

Causeway's action was characteristic of his shrewdness. He sent two contracts as his answer to them. They

were offered each five years' steady employment at two hundred and fifty dollars per week.

"It makes us his puppets, together or apart at his pleasure, for five years," Marcel told her, putting before her, in a word, the cruel issue which had held him in its martyring vise for so many months.

She laughed, with an indifference which piqued him into a doubt of her sincerity.

"It keeps us together or apart at our pleasure, not his," she answered. Then, with decision: "I shall sign. Are you afraid?"

"Why, no," he responded slowly, his mind occupied less with the thought of her unhesitating perception of their advantage under the agreement, than with her ready eluding of his obvious intimation.

And he signed the contract which, whatever it might mean for their relations to each other, secured to him comparative wealth and his position in the profession.

It was the close of their tour. Their stay in Philadelphia ended with the Friday evening performance. They went on to New York, and to their concluding appearance at the Booth, knowing that the prestige of their weeks of triumph meant a night of intoxicating success, but of well-nigh insupportable strain. They lunched together at a familiar restaurant—outwardly their kind, comradey selves, but with an undertone of constraint which filled Marcel with grim foreboding. As they faced each other in readiness to depart, she looked straight into his eyes and said:

"Marcel, I am going to see my father's new store, on Fifth Avenue. Will you come?"

With a qualm of apprehension which was sentient of his first, strange dread of unknown conditions, he assented. They arrived at a newly remodeled building on Fifth Avenue which displayed the single word, "Meier." A well-bred attendant led them to a private office which was, in effect, a charming reception-room. Through the half-closed door, they glimpsed Meier—

but so transformed a Meier! Irreproachable in afternoon dress, his beard borne with the dignity of an Aaron, his skull-cap crowning the austere gravity of a Montefiore, he delivered an ultimatum to the natty clubman who stood, in quaint, amused humility before him.

"No, Mr. Dripple, I gannod bermid you to wear checks. Cray, tark cray, iss all vich your shdyle gan allow—So-oh? Oh, yess, tere iss odder dailors—also in Lonton, yess. *Aber* Meier, he iss in Nei Yorck—undt Meier's gusdomers iss his rebudashuns."

After a few minutes he came to them, dignified affection for his daughter, dignified reserve for Marcel. With an imperial air, he showed them through the establishment—an enterprise of magnitude, even for New York. They returned to his office, and he told the Aladdin tale. He had been inspired by Causeway's commendation. He thought and planned. He betook himself to the all-powerful syndicate. It should finance him and advertise him as a "greed merchant dailors." He asked only twenty per cent. of the net profits, with a temporary allowance of ten dollars per week to live upon. The syndicate laughed at him. But Causeway—der chenious Gausevay—had made it his personal venture. Meier's own share was already five thousand dollars. He would soon open a permanent branch in Chicago. The business promised an independent fortune. And Causeway had just consented to back him in an altogether novel bid to the syndicate, to contract for its whole, vast business of costume-making.

He regarded his daughter with a proud tenderness.

"Sarah, you pin goot girls. Ach, dose kisses on der staiche. I—I see dem, vile you know id nod. Who should to marry you, ven he dose kisses sees? Bud Gausevay, he show me vot makings-up dey iss. Soh! Sarah"—in awed solemnity—"I pe bartners mit millionaires; putty soon ve pin rich. You pin goot girls, Sarah; you s'all in der Vanderpilts marry, *hein*, Sarah?"

She flushed into her deep, dusky glow of beauty; and, glancing at Marcel's

set, paling face, questioned her father hurriedly:

"But, father, where is our home now?"

"Oh," with a fine indifference, "we haf shdill der place on Proatvay. I haf pushilmans dere, in der shdore. Mein abardments, dey iss up-shdairs, like always."

"Father," and Sarah's tones were directly accusing, "how can you, how should you, who are to be so rich, live in that miserable hole?"

Even to Marcel, drawn as he was with his own haggard presentiments, the expression of moribund fear which came into the old man's eyes was pitiful.

"S-s-sh, mein Sarah! It iss goot rents, yess? Undt ven der gr-rade Meier, von Fift' Afenue, he goes proke, maype somedimes, he iss der liddle Proatvay dailors yet, *hein*? Ah, I haf so long vorked undt starfed—I gannod yet pelief id iss so drue."

Sarah, who was not given to the facile, meaningless tears tapped by many in her calling, kissed the old man, her eyes frankly wet, in the sympathy of her understanding. Marcel stifled the groan that was half-wrung from him in contemplation of the power over her happiness which lay in the old man's hands.

"You will see our play to-night, father?" she asked nervously.

"Ein brifate pox in," he answered proudly. "Mein bartner, Gausevay, I am hiss kest. In a gab, Sarah—undt mid voll-tress suits. You gome home to Proatvay to-nide, yess?"

She hesitated long; then:

"Yes, father. But don't wait for me after the performance. Go right home. I will be there a little later. I must go. Good-by, father."

With a sudden, shrewd inspiration, the old man took her in his arms and kissed her on the brow.

"Goot-py, mein Sarah!" he said softly. "You pin goot girls."

She wrenched herself from him, as in escape from an agony; and a sob broke from her, as she cried:

"Oh, let me go—let me go! You will break my poor heart between you."

She spoke little to Marcel as they went to the theater, to make sure of arrangements preliminary for the night. Nor did he essay comfort or comment. He realized that she had arrived at a decision; and he divined that, with her customary directness, she would act upon it before they reached the tiny shop on Broadway, late in the night—if, indeed, they should not part at the dim stage-door. He avoided her resolutely, until, with the curtain up, they met upon the stage—his whole strength, during the hours intervening, spent in the vain effort to reconcile himself to the inevitable parting. It was the house alone—the crowded, expectant, tensely still theater—which drew him from his trance of iterating self-control, and called into reckless, proud existence the artist whose work must be his one salvation. One long and longing look he vouchsafed his love for her, from the safe haven of the wings, as she swept out upon the boards. Then he followed her, the man—and the heart of man in him—dead; the actor and the artist imbued with that forfeited life.

The town still tells of that marvelous performance of *Terwilliger Dassent* by the brilliant De Bonair. It recalls, too, how the beautiful Sarah Meier rose with him, height after height, twin artist, twin genius, as though she were bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. The house, on the instant of the risen curtain, twanged into accord like some true violin-string. Causeway—the cynical, blasé Causeway—leaned forward, his heavy elbows on the edge of the box, through act after act, in sheer, rapt delight over the greatness of his puppets. Beside him, Meier, in the quaint preciseness of unaccustomed evening dress, sat haughtily conscious that this palpitating world bated its breath in entranced tribute to the power of the daughter who was his.

To Marcel, the brief interludes of rest which came to him, after his swift changes for the acts, were so many moments of torture. He dreaded the climax of the third act as a man may

dread his execution; he longed to have done with its cruel farce. And he played with the sublime abandon which marks the achievement of true genius under harshest stress.

The moment came, with the whole house tense in its expectancy, and with Sarah, a sudden glow flushing her beauty into a confusing loveliness, twined in his embrace. The arms that held her were trembling in the iron restraint his will had put upon the mastering accession of his longing; the breast, against which her bosom pressed so warmly, throbbed to the hard beating of his heart. She tore one arm free, and clasped it around his neck, drawing his aching lips to hers with a convulsive force which could not be denied.

"Kiss me, Marcel!" she whispered, and her burning tones seemed to fall in fire upon his bared heart. "Kiss me—fully, really, as you love me—if you do."

Their lips met and clung together, in ravishing oblivion of the thousands who gazed, until the rattling thunder of the applause awoke them to their mimic rôles. The curtain fell and rose, again and again, upon the call of the reluctantly departing throng.

The cab, which Marcel had in waiting as a last attention to her if she chose to accept it, took them along familiar, bright Broadway, both still too worn out with their emotions to speak. They were content, for the narrow interval, to exchange a hand pressure which told eloquently of the happiness that was theirs.

The little, lost door near Twenty-third Street was black in its midnight darkness; but the dull light, which rayed from the room above the stair, told them the old man waited for the promised home-coming. As they passed into the sheltering darkness of the tiny store, Sarah hesitated for a moment only.

"Kiss me, dear!" she murmured, as if to gain a courage which she lacked.

Her father, for once invested with the reverend dignity which is a father's rightful attribute, rose in the slow weakness of broken age.

"Sarah," he said simply, in the deep German he used when they were alone, "it was my daughter who dishonored me before the town to night. It is not my daughter who comes to me after my dishonoring."

"Father"—she spoke in English, and with an appearance of calmness which her trembling body denied—"Marcel and I are to be married now."

"You—the daughter of Immanuel Meier, of Fifth Avenue—to marry an

actor who earns less than half your salary, an actor whose bread you have put into his mouth?"

She managed to summon her dauntless, braving smile.

"Oh, no, father! Marcel's salary is now ten thousand a year—and it is guaranteed for five years to come."

Something, which was infinitely gentle, softened the stern features of the old man.

"So-o-o-oh?" said Immanuel Meier.



"THE SPIRIT CAME AND PLEAD"

THE Spirit came and plead:

Believe, believe in me!

With sure, unswerving tread

Thy feet shall e'er be led;

With bread thy lips be fed;

And I will show to thee

The Way of Liberty:

Life, for a day of song,

To melt some mist of wrong,

To help some heart grow strong.

Death, for a dreamless sleep,

When eyes have ceased to weep,

When Time forgets to reap.

Then Liberty, at last—

Love, endless, boundless—vast,

When Life, Death, both are past!

WILLIAM STRUTHERS.

A VERY ORDINARY AFFAIR



R. SEYMOUR GILLING entered his office as the clock in Lincoln's Inn Fields struck ten. Only three times in twenty years had he arrived and hung up his carefully ironed silk hat in a cupboard facing the door of his prim and solidly furnished room a few minutes after this hour. The first time was the morning before he was married. The second, the morning of the birth of his son. The third, the morning after the funeral of his wife. On each of these occasions he had been from three to seven minutes late.

As usual, having dropped his hat expertly into a box in the cupboard and changed his scrupulously well-cut coat for one of an exactly similar cut but a greater age, he stood for a moment in front of the looking-glass over the carved oak mantelpiece, drew back his lips and looked at his teeth. They were strong, white and even. He then warmed his hands in front of the fire, dropped the end of his cigar into it, cleared his throat, crossed over to his desk, sat down, and drew up the legs of his trousers an inch.

The brownish light of a December morning fell upon a well-cut, clean-shaven face, a largish round head, upon which thin, gray hair was brushed away from the forehead with a mathematically correct center parting, and upon a pair of large, shrewd gray eyes, toward the corners of which ran a number of clear-cut lines. Even in London, seated at his desk, in what obviously was a

solicitor's office, Mr. Seymour Gilling might easily have been mistaken for a typical M. F. H. of the old school.

Mr. Gilling touched his bell, and unlocked several drawers. A young, sal-low man, suffering from adenoids, with a feather of hair erect upon the top of his head, entered quickly.

"I will see Lord Kyle," said Mr. Gilling.

"I'b soddy, sir, but his lordship has not yed cub."

"Ah!" Mr. Gilling's hand fell upon a pile of unopened letters. He ran them over with a finger and drew forth a telegram. "Perhaps this—yes. Lord Kyle is to be a few minutes late. Is there a person in the office who gives his name as Major Knipe?"

"Yed, sir."

"Ah! Give him the *Times*—no, the *Daily Mail*, and don't let him in to me until I send for him. If he is garrulous, remember accurately anything that he may say which has to do either with Lord Kyle or a Miss Mignon Le Blond — That motor has stopped here, I think."

The young man went quickly to the window.

"Yed, sir. Id's Lord Kyle."

"Show him in at once."

As the clerk hurried softly out of the room, Mr. Gilling put his hand into the top drawer on the right-hand side of his desk, and brought out several letters, round which there was an india-rubber band. This he drew off, and spread the letters neatly out upon his blotting-pad.

"Lord Kyle."

Mr. Gilling rose and bowed to a tall,

slight, good-looking boy with thick, wavy hair, a slight mustache, and blue eyes.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir——"

"Not at all," replied Mr. Gilling. "Pray sit down."

The boy did so, crossing one leg over the other, in order to look with an air of ingenuous admiration that was very charming at an almost too beautiful sock.

"It's about the marriage settlement again, I suppose, Mr. Gilling?"

"No, that is in order. I asked you to be good enough to see me this morning to enable me to read a letter to you received by me yesterday morning."

Lord Kyle arrested a yawn.

"Oh, thanks," he said. "From the insurance office?"

"No," said Mr. Gilling. "From a person who writes from the Cecil Club, Fulham Road, and signs himself Joseph Knipe, Major."

The boy's back stiffened and his eyelids flickered.

"Knipe? Knipe?"

"Do you know the name?"

"Er—yes. I do. I've met the man—er—twice—by accident. What the devil—deuce does the fellow want to write to you about?"

"Let me read the letter:

"Cecil Club, Fulham Road. S. W. 18-12-07. Sir: Re Viscount Kyle, of Lochalish, Lieutenant, Scots Guards. My attention has been drawn to an announcement in the *Morning Post* of the approaching nuptials of this nobleman and Lady Mary Lyminge. I should like you, as this gentleman's legal adviser, to assure me that same is not an accurate announcement, because, as a matter of strict fact, same is and has for some time been, engaged to be married to my female offspring, so well known to all lovers of the drama as Miss Mignon Le Blond, who holds letters to this effect. As I am anxious for my child not to be dragged into a breach of promise action, be good enough to let me hear from you to above at earliest convenience."

The boy sprang to his feet. "Good Heavens!" he said.

"Exactly," replied Mr. Gilling. "Scenting blackmail here of the most impudent kind, I wrote yesterday to this Major Snipe—Knipe. He is here, but before we see him——"

The boy sat down and drew up his chair to the desk. "It isn't true, of course, that I am, or ever was, engaged to Miggy—Miss Le Blond; but when I thought I was in love with her and all that rot I did write to her—a lot."

"Ah!" said Mr. Gilling. "You did, did you? The usual kind?"

The boy's face reddened. "I dunno," he said. "I suppose so."

"'Love till death,'" said Mr. Gilling calmly. "'You and I hand in hand through life'; 'never to part'; 'let the world say what it will'; 'you and you only have won my heart'; 'how can I live till you name the happy day?'"

"Have you seen my letters?" asked the boy quickly, astonished.

"Many times," replied Mr. Gilling, "written by a great many of you. They have always fetched large sums of money, in and out of court. How long have you known this young lady, then?"

"About two years. She's a show girl."

"I see. I notice that her father didn't call her an actress. During this time you have made yourself responsible for—what?"

"Oh, her rent and dresses and that sort of thing, you know."

"Altogether, about?"

"Four hundred a year."

"And since you have been engaged to Lady Mary Lyminge?"

"I've not been near her."

"But you have gone on paying?"

"Yes. I've been going to tell her fifty times, but—something's always cropped up. She's such a good little sort."

Mr. Gilling's eyebrows—wiry eyebrows, some of which were reddish—went up. "Oh, is she?" he asked dryly. "Then I suppose, seeing that they all keep your letters for future use, they are all 'good little sorts'?"

"I suppose so," said the boy.

"How much may I offer the major, and how much may I pay him?"

"I dunno," said the boy. "I'm afraid I must leave it to you."

"In any case, I take it you want this kept out of court."

The boy shot a look of utter fright

and horror at the imperturbable solicitor, but kept himself well under control.

"Oh, please," he said, as though he were accepting another cup of tea.

"I see." Mr. Gilling touched his bell. When the adenoidous clerk appeared, he received a gentle request to bring in the major.

Lord Kyle got up quickly and walked to the window. Mr. Seymour Gilling cocked a single eye-glass into his left eye, and turned his chair slightly toward the door. They both heard a high-pitched voice in which a Cockney accent struggled desperately with one that was a sort of German carat gold.

"Eh? Orl right, lad. In here?"

A man of middle height entered and stood in the doorway for a moment irresolutely. The remains of his hair were dyed black. His nose had been broken. Beneath it a large, bushy, black mustache stuck out, twisted into sharp points with soap. His small, glittering eyes were barely visible, so closed up were they from gout, debauchery, and late hours. The flesh of his cheeks and chin sagged unhealthily. His clothes were of the cheap, loud order, obviously "off the peg," and he wore dirty white spats and displayed a great deal of cuff. In his white tie he wore an imitation pearl pin, and a bunch of decaying Parma violets in his buttonhole. His expression was kaleidoscopic. Blatant impudence, cowardice and suspicion, greed, optimism, confidence and uneasiness—they all flickered over his villainous face in turn.

Having darted a quick look from the elderly to the young man, he stepped jauntily forward.

"Har yar?" he said to Mr. Gilling. "Pretty well? Pretty well? Hello, Face," he continued, turning impudently toward Lord Kyle. "I beg your pardon, reely. It slipped out. My little girl calls our friend here Face always, and, of course, I always think of him —"

"Sit down," interrupted Mr. Gilling.

"Thankee. Don't mind if I do. An American?" He held out a silver cigarette-case to the solicitor.

"No, thank you."

"You, sonny?"

"No, thanks," said the boy, with a shudder.

"I—er—don't seem able to find you in my particular Army List, sir," said Mr. Gilling blandly.

Knife shot out a very much too loud laugh.

"I belong to the Ood Brigade. What? Major commanding the Corps of Commission-takers, the Second Battalion of the West End Sharpshooters, commonly called the Boys and the Wassers. Do you take me?"

"Thank you," said Mr. Gilling. "I know your regiment as the Blackmailers."

"Oh, yes, yes, you would."

"I see. Now, tell me. I have read your note. We agree that you hold letters, and that they are not worth more to us than five hundred pounds. Shall I write you a check?"

"On account of twenty thousand pounds, yes. Delighted." He looked from one expressionless face to the other, and gave a chuckle.

"Good morning," said Mr. Gilling.

The major put his hat on the desk and crossed his legs. "Very well done, Mr. G., he said good-humoredly. "Congrats. See you've handled my sort ere this. But we—my girl and me—have talked this matter over, and we fix the loss of a title and position and so forth and so on at twenty thousand. We name this sum also because, as you may reckon, Mr. G., old man Iver led the jury into a similar findin' only the other day in a case called in the papers 'The Peer and the Peri.' Am I right?"

"Perfectly," said Mr. Gilling.

"Well, we ain't goin' to haggle. What Birdie Studd was satisfied with Mignon Le Blond will take. Ong pass-ong, let me say that I'm all against goin' to court. These are careless times, but I'm of the old school. I'm all against publicity. I'm too sensitive to stand up to the black-and-white artists, and shy at being murdered in *Lloyd's*. My daughter, she's all for the court. Twenty thousand ready and a good advertisement's too fine to miss for a be-

ginner in the histrionic profession. She sees herself leaping from the comparative gloom of the back row slap into the star line. And, of course, I see her argument. But as I pointed out to her, what about Face? There I go again, sonny. I'm sorry. Of course she wants to wait till after he's married; she has no horrid desire to break off the aristocratic alliance, not she. She says as how our young friend here will get all he deserves better from a wife than a fecannsay. Ha! ha! Trust a wronged woman to do the right thing. And so it comes to this: Me and my girl have disagreed as to procedure, but agree as to price. With a check for twenty thou to dangle in front of her pretty little nose I could make her forget all about the court. So it's up to you—what?"

Mr. Gilling touched his bell. "We will communicate with you to-night," he said. "Good day."

The major rose. "I won't be interviewed by the *Mail*," he added, with a genuine and irrepressible burst of triumph. "How true it is that everything comes to the man who knows how to wait. I don't want to bore you with domestics, but I may tell you that I've waited patiently for this from the very moment that the doctor told me it was a gurl. Fine—what? Well, then, good day, Mr. G. Good day, sonny. The Cecil Club for wires and letters."

He picked up his hat, put it on at an angle of forty-five, waved his hand, and with elbows stuck out and heels rapping the floor sharply, he preceded the clerk out of the room.

The boy stood quite motionless, staring at the door. He saw many unpleasant pictures upon its polished surface—indignant parents, public ridicule, a visit to the Jews, the acceptance of his papers, the possible estrangement of the girl he loved—all the result of being in the fashion, of indulging in the lowest form of amusement that is practised by the men of his set.

Mr. Gilling cleared his throat. "If your letters are as bad as you lead me to believe," he said quietly, "the price that man puts upon them must be paid."

"They are," said the boy. "At one time I did think of marrying her, and said so plainly. But I don't believe Miggy wants to put me into this appalling cart. She's a good sort."

Mr. Gilling drew his breath through his teeth skeptically.

The boy turned impulsively to the solicitor. "If I'd treated her decently and played the game—I mean, told her that I wanted to say good-by and go and be married—she'd have thought no more of giving me my letters than buying a new hat. I tell you, Miggy's a good sort."

"Is that man her father?" asked Mr. Gilling.

"Yes, but she's different. This is his idea. I don't blame him for trying to work it, but I don't see Miggy in this. I shall go and see her."

"Please don't," said Mr. Gilling.

"I really shall," said the boy. "I must."

"Then I fear you will have to find another solicitor to advise you in this matter," said Mr. Gilling, rising.

"I sha'n't want another solicitor, or any solicitor. Look here, Mr. Gilling, I'm awfully obliged to you, but I'm sure I'm right about Miggy, and I'll bring back those letters in an hour. Let me try."

Mr. Gilling was a lawyer of many years' standing; for that reason he had no belief in human nature. He knew that when his clients had made sufficiently large enough fools of themselves to call him in, only one way out was possible—to pay. Every act of folly must be paid for. It was his business either to make his clients receive as much as possible, or pay as little as possible. Such ingenuousness as this boy displayed caused him great irritation. It also filled him with pity.

"I shall expect you in an hour," he said. "We will then talk sense."

He seemed to relish the prospect.

II.

The boy ran up the stone stairs of Regent Mansions, Shaftesbury Avenue, three at a time. He had pressed the

bell of the elevator again and again without success. He could wait no longer. He was certain that Miggy was a good sort, and he was possessed with a strong desire to prove it to Mr. Gilling. He also wanted not to pay twenty thousand pounds, not to find himself the topic of conversation among all kinds and conditions of men, and not to see something in the eyes of the girl he loved that would mean the end of happiness.

It didn't occur to him to give a thought to the Miggy who was such a good sort. Why should he? Other men's Miggies didn't mind much. It was all part of the game of life—a more amusing and far more expensive game than golf. Besides, hadn't he paid?"

He opened the door of the flat with a latch-key. The narrow hall, untidy and unswept, was peculiarly and most unpleasantly stuffy. Several pairs of egregiously high-heeled shoes and boots had been flung down in one corner. Here and there, on the sad-looking linoleum, lay half a dozen gleaming hair-pins.

The door of Miss Mignon Le Blond's bedroom was open. From it issued the raucous and rasping sound of a gramophone. The tune it was playing was an American cake-walk. Kyle could see that the diabolical machine was under the personal supervision of the elevator-boy, clothed in a shabby uniform.

He could also see Miggy lying in bed, propped up among pillows, with her very golden head ruffled and untidy, and her beautiful little flowerlike face still wearing traces of last night's make-up. Over a much-belaced night-dress she wore a once gorgeous dressing-jacket, now stained with tea and coffee. Her rather shrill voice sang the air of the cake-walk. Her long fingers were teasing a Persian kitten. Curled up by her side in the pink silk eider-down lay a King Charles spaniel fast asleep. At the foot of the bed, on top of clothing and stockings, stood a breakfast-tray. Letters and a newspaper had been flung on to the plates, which held the remains of a meal. On the floor were a saucer of milk, more clothing, a pair of red

bath-room slippers, several magazines and some loose pages of music.

The tune came to a hissing end.

"Pretty 'ot that, miss, eh?" said the elevator-boy.

"Yes, indeed, dearie," said the girl. "Go on. Shove on another. Keep makin' a noise. I shall scream if it's quiet and I can hear myself think." She heard a sound in the passage. "That you, dad?"

"No," said Kyle, entering the room. "It's me, Miggy."

A painful flush rushed into the girl's face and a look of unsuppressible joy gleamed in her eyes.

"Oh, Face, Face!" she cried, and held out both her hands. The elevator-boy looked up from the machine with a grin, put another record on quickly, and dropped the pin expertly into the middle of it. Instantly a high-pitched nasal voice filled the little room, to the accompaniment of a jingling piano:

"Waiting at the church,
Waiting at the church,
Waiting at the church!"

Kyle rushed forward and took the pin off the record. "Stop that thing, will you? And go to the elevator!"

The urchin did so, threw a wink at the girl, put up his hand in salute, and darted away.

When Kyle turned to the girl she was holding the kitten against her chin, and there was a sneer on her face.

"Oh, I see!" she said.

"What do you see, Miggy, dear?"

"I see why this is the first time you've been near me for weeks. I just didn't count, did I, before you found I could make things pretty seethin' for you? So glad to see you. Pray excuse the slight untidiness of my bedchamber. My second footman is down with the croup."

Kyle gave a laugh. "The same merry Miggy," he said, sitting on the bed.

The girl's eyes narrowed, and she held the kitten to her mouth to hide trembling lips.

"You've just seen dad at the solicitor's, I suppose?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Is that why you've come?"

"Yes."

"I've got you pretty tight, haven't I?"

"Yes."

"Jolly bright readin' for the great British Public, eh?"

"Yes."

"Oh, aren't we chatty?"

"I don't feel very chatty, Miggy."

"You surprise me!"

"I don't think I do."

The boy put his hand lightly upon the head of the sleeping dog. It woke up, looked lazily at Kyle for a moment, recognized him, uncurled itself quickly, and made a wild, delighted rush at him to lick his face.

"Hullo, you jolly little thing!" said Kyle.

"Any one 'u'd think she'd missed you," said the girl. She made a long arm, caught the spaniel by the back of the neck, and held her tight.

There was a silence, broken only by the distant noise of ceaseless traffic in the street below and the whining of the little dog.

"Don't use those letters, Miggy. They'll ruin my life."

"I don't care."

"Yes, you do. That's just the point. You do care. I'm very sorry I played the coward by you. I deserve all you can give me."

"I'm going to give it to you, too," she replied.

"No, you're not."

"Why aren't I, pray?"

"Because the Miggy I know doesn't do those things. She's not like the others. She's a good sort."

The girl shot out what was a cross between a laugh and a sob. "I see your game. Flattery, eh?"

"No, it isn't. I haven't got a game. However rotten I may be, I know you. I told Mr. Gilling that I should return with my letters in an hour, and I shall."

"Did he believe you?"

"No."

The girl put her hand under her pillow, drew out a bundle of letters, and

handed them to the boy. "Take 'em," she said.

"Thanks," said the boy.

This time Miss Mignon Le Blond laughed loudly.

"'Pon my word," she said, "you take it quietly!"

"I know you, you see," said Kyle simply, "and I should only have been surprised if you hadn't given them to me." He took the girl's hand.

She crumpled up. All the pretense of scorn, of devil-may-care, of hardness, left her. She lay back on her pillows. Her face looked pinched and drawn. She clutched his hand despairingly. Then she threw it away, and sat up.

"Now then, Face, do something for your living. Just start that gramophone, will you?"

"Right oh!" said the boy. He chose one of Sousa's band marches. The room shook with blatant sounds. Kyle stood listening for a moment, and then bent over the girl.

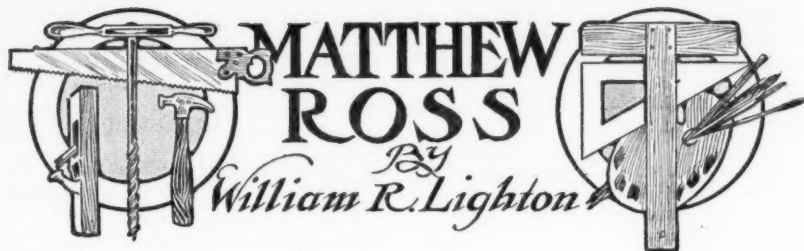
"Oh, Lord, no!" she said, pushing him away. "Thank you. No pity kisses for me. Must you go? Pity you didn't make a bet about this with your solicitor. You'd have won a bit. Good-by! Mind the saucer!"

"Good-by," said Kyle.

The girl sprang forward, flung her arms round the boy's neck, pressed her lips to his, pushed him violently away, slipped back among the pillows, and buried her face in her arms.

After the boy had gone, and the tune had run its circles, and the pin on the recorder was still, another sound filled the little ragamuffin room, a sound the genuineness of which Mr. Gilling would never have believed in, and the boy never have forgotten.

The only one who heard it was the spaniel. She realized that her mistress was in distress, gave a whine, thought hard for a moment, and then jumped off the bed and ran to a secret place, in the corner of the room. She returned with a biscuit, jumped on the bed and stood over the slight, shaking figure of the girl, wagging a generous tail.



MATTHEW ROSS

By William R. Lighton



AN obscure country town was Bellevue; its annals unsung save in the mild gossip of the fireside, its people all unlearned save in the simple ways of honesty—that good, unworldly sort of honesty which is practised among friends; honesty that keeps no close accounts, yet forgets not debts or benefits. Folk so primitive are not likely to gain celebrity; and Bellevue was obscure. In the country round about was pastoral thrift, with plenty and to spare, and little need of harsh relations with the big world outside; so, on its sunlit bench of land between the little river and the wooded hillslopes beyond, and lulled by their placid voices from year's end to year's end, the town led a life of tranquil quietude.

On the one main-traveled thoroughfare, at a point where traffic ceased, giving way to cottage-homes set in wide gardens, stood a little wooden building, close against the walk. Across the front, over the doorway, hung a black-lettered sign-board, with the legend: "Matthew Ross, Cabinet-Maker." Without, along the walls, were neat piles of seasoned lumber; within was the clean, strewn litter of a busy workshop—tools lying here and there, handy for use, and deep beds of chips and shavings over floor and bench.

A wholesome smell pervaded the place, smell of new wood and varnish; and a wholesome light flooded it from the low evening sun that shone golden through the western windows. It was a full hour past the time when a

grudging laborer would have called his day's work done; but the shop was still open, and a man bent over a massive oak table, newly finished, rubbing its top to a mirrorlike luster. That was Matthew Ross.

Presently he stood back, drawing himself erect. His was a fine, stalwart figure, strong-boned and well-muscled; his head was big and shaggy; his face, which was that of a man of thirty-five years or thereabout, was statuelike in its rugged firmness, with many signs of grim restraint upon it, so that at first sight the gentler expressions seemed to have no place there; but when one saw into his eyes, they appeared as deep wells of kindness.

There was no mistaking that he had given himself hard discipline in mastering those old, wild desires that will rise in the heart of a man to trouble his manhood; but the rigor of conquest had not left him worn or disillusioned or embittered. Plainly the tang of life was still fresh and good to his taste.

As he stood thus, soberly contemplating his work, a passing villager paused at the doorway and looked within.

"Hello, Matt! You're working late," he said.

Matthew pointed to his table, with a gesture of pride. "I wanted to finish it; and now it's done. It's a good piece of work, too—the best I've ever done. Not one stroke of a tool went wrong, and nothing was slighted. Two hundred years won't wear it out. Why, if you stop to think, it's going to give me a sort of immortality. I made it; I put myself into it—three weeks of my

life—and it'll be here long after I am dead. While I've been working, I've been thinking of the happy generations that are to sit around it and eat their bread from it and pass good words across it. They won't think about me; but I'll know. Maybe I'll stand by sometimes."

The other man smiled indulgently. "You're an odd chap, Matt."

"Yes, that's true enough. A little mad, maybe. Anyway, I'm glad it's finished." He laid his hand fondly upon the shining wood. "I've always wanted to do a perfect piece of work; and there it stands."

They talked together in friendly fashion until the sun had set and the shadows were brooding. Then the visitor went homeward, and Matthew, after fastening the doors, groped his way to a tiny room at the back of the shop, where he lit an oil-lamp and set about the preparation of his solitary supper.

"A little mad, maybe!" The village folk might easily have agreed to that; for madness is an easy word, applied since the world began to any strong, superior quality in a man that lifts him above the understanding of his fellows. There was that about him which eluded the grasp of slow, dull wits.

"In the sweat of thy brow"—was not that a curse solemnly pronounced upon toil? Yet here was one who defiantly loved his tools and his tasks, who talked of the joy of labor, and who ate his daily bread with an appetite, as though the sweat that was mingled with it gave it an added pleasant savor. And some queer, mad sayings dropped from him now and again, such as these: "There is a new gospel waiting to be taught by a new savior; the gospel of work." "It is not a man's business to care too much for rewards. Mere wage-earning is a poor business."

And once, in reply to a word of exhortation concerning his soul's welfare, to which it was feared he was giving no very anxious heed, he said: "When Saint Peter halts me at the gate, I'll show him my hands, marked by my tools; and if he won't let me pass, I sha'n't have much trouble getting a job

somewhere else." And then, when he had thought a bit: "I'm not worrying about that eternity of yours; I'm not even worrying about to-morrow. I mean to do my day's work and leave the rest until the time comes. It's a whim of mine."

That was a favorite phrase upon his lips, made familiar by many repetitions. The people had learned by and by to indulge him and his whims; for he was a good citizen, very generous in his moderate prosperity.

That he should prosper seemed somehow inevitable, once it had come to pass. There was no mistaking the quality of his work. Beautiful things grew easily, naturally, under his hand—tables and cabinets and big, comfortable chairs; things made to last; things that had in them his own rugged simplicity and strength. In the course of years he had earned a reputation that went far beyond Bellevue, and he had always as much work as he could do.

One thing seemed strange, however; he insisted upon working alone. More than once the worldly-wise had counseled him to make his shop bigger and hire other workmen. It would make him rich, they said. But he had put this aside quietly, and from first to last he had done everything with his own hands.

When the next day came he locked his shop doors early in the morning, and set off from the village on foot, his eyes eager, his cheeks glowing with healthy delight in the summer warmth. That was another whim of his. Now and again, when the humor was on him, he would quit his bench, dress for outdoors, and fare idly about through the woods, perhaps for a day or perhaps for a week, coming back when he was ready.

Neither season nor weather checked him in these moods. Sometimes in his wanderings he would single out a tree in the woods that would serve him in his shop, and this he would cut and trim with his own ax; but far oftener he would only loiter aimlessly, enjoying wind and clouds, earth and sky. He took no companions on these queer ex-

cursions; he wanted to be alone, he said. Always, if the villagers had but noticed, when he returned from these mild adventures it was to begin with fresh zest upon some new and beautiful piece of work—some creation thought out in solitude.

On this morning he seemed to have no plan for his day. At the border of the village, where the home-lined street became an open country road, he paused for a time to deliberate before taking up his walk again, moving lazily, as though time counted for nothing. It was enough to be enfolded in the warm heart of the exquisite summer.

Stopping often, he passed slowly across fields and through shaded byways to a hill-crest he loved—a round summit grown with stately elms, with wide vistas of river-valley and rolling prairie showing everywhere between the mighty trunks. He was never tired of this place in the times when he strayed apart; it had become for him as a sort of holy place, in whose unspoiled wildness that mad fancy of his could revel at its will, his unveiled eyes beholding continually new images of God.

Never before had he found other folk in this solitude; but to-day, as he moved slowly about, he was suddenly made aware of intruders. There was a murmur of quiet voices and the sound of low laughter; then he saw two women seated together upon light outdoor stools, with easels set up before them. For a day or two he had been hearing of some strangers summering at a farm near-by—artist-people, gossip said. These must be they.

He paused at a little distance, thinking to turn aside; but the sight of such workers at their tasks was new to him, and he drew nearer.

Only one of the two was at work, with appearance of diligence; the other sat idle, her elbows upon her knees, her chin in her hands, in the attitude of one whose purpose lagged. There was nothing in his experience that forbade, and he spoke to them.

"My name is Matthew Ross. I live here, in Bellevue. I wonder if I may see what you are doing."

They gave him a swift glance. His face, reflecting his way of living, always begat confidence, and these two put up no barriers against him. The one who was at work answered lightly:

"Yes, you may see, if you like."

She was the younger of the two; about three or four and twenty, with a rare, vivid beauty; the buoyant life in her revealing itself in the clear hue of her skin, in the vital luster of her hair, in the limpid glow of her eyes, in every line of her figure and pose. Matthew's glance rested first upon her, with involuntary approval, before he looked at the canvas before her.

Her easel held a picture nearly finished—a brilliant bit, aglow with summery freshness and luxuriance, strong with golden light and cool green shadows. The lines were true and skilful, and, most of all, he caught a subtle embodiment of the worker's own exultant youth, and felt a little thrill of pleasure. But when he had looked for a moment or two, he began to doubt.

The girl laid her full brush upon the foreground with a practised touch; then, with a pretty turn of her head, she sat regarding the effect. When he did not speak, she asked abruptly: "How do you like it?"

True to his habit, he said what he thought.

"You can paint. I see that. But aren't you trifling with it a little?"

Her eyes flashed a curious look into his. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"You have turned it into a park in the picture. You have left out a great deal—the stuff that people would call ugly if they didn't know much about beauty. You have kept only the living parts, without the death that is written all over it. It is very elegant; but the real meaning is gone."

She looked at him again, more keenly; but she seemed to find no cause of offense in his speech, for she broke into a rippling laugh of amusement.

"Have you seen it, too?" she returned, with an air of banter. "Well, but let me tell you something. I am making this picture to sell. People won't buy

presentments of death. I have found out what they want, and I'm making it. You should be talking to my sister there. Katherine will believe you—she believes already."

Then for the first time Matthew looked with attention at the other woman. She was older than her companion, by four or five years, and of less abounding spirits. There was a sweet gravity upon her lips and in her gray eyes, that met his fairly. Matthew reflected that she was one of those women whom a man might pass in a public place without thinking to turn for a second look, so slight and quiet she was; but now that they had been brought face to face, all at once he felt what a loss it would have been had he missed this moment. Sometimes there come those meetings that are like taking up for a second time a friendship begun long ago, but somehow interrupted and lapsed even from memory.

Ere he spoke to her, he scanned the work she was neglecting. It was the merest beginning of a picture—a few strong, bold, simple lines in charcoal, showing the ragged foreground, with a crooked, rotting log and a tangle of undergrowths. Not much was revealed, but everything was suggested.

"Ah!" Matthew breathed, with quick comprehension. "Now, that is something like!" Then, as the fact struck him: "But you aren't finishing it."

"No," she agreed, very quietly. "That is a way my pictures have. Anna calls me indolent; but it isn't that!" There was a tremor of agitation in her tone; her hands, lying in her lap, betrayed her feeling, and she averted her eyes, looking away toward the far line where earth and sky met.

As his glance rested upon her, Matthew's heart was stirred out of its wonted tranquillity and its beat quickened. Suddenly then she confronted him, her eyes searching his as though to find sympathetic warrant for what she would say.

"I've had the same trouble before," she said, with the same simplicity. "It's easy enough to paint things, if you leave out the meaning, and it's more

than I can do to put it in. That's why my work doesn't get finished."

Matthew stood for a little while, regarding her, a warm glow of understanding suffusing him. He felt that here was one whose speech was in his own tongue—a happening most rare in the lives of thoughtful men.

"It will come all right by and by," he said presently. "It has with me, though I used to be a good deal dismayed."

"Oh!" she said. "Are you——"

He interrupted with an amused laugh. "An artist, too? Yes. I'm a wood-worker. You must come to my shop some day and see. I suppose my work helps me to understand the trouble you have. A bad picture is as poor a thing as a bad table, isn't it? Though people aren't used to think so."

A short silence fell, which Matthew broke. "Well, I'll go now. I wish we might meet again and talk of these things. Maybe we shall. It wasn't an accident that we met to-day; I don't believe in accidents. Good-by."

He went on his way then, slowly, without looking back. There was no need; for before him, floating in air, went a sweet, grave face, its calm gray eyes looking steadfastly into his.

They did meet again, and by his choosing, on the next afternoon, when he presented himself at their farmhouse. He was sure he would find them, for a June rain had been falling all day, and none but the hardier folk was abroad.

An unwonted light was in his eyes, an unwonted sense of exhilaration in his mind, when he found himself sitting with them in their airy upper room, looking about at the strewn signs and tokens of their craft; daubed palettes, scarred drawing-boards, jars of brushes and pretty odds and ends.

The younger woman was at work before her easel by a deep window, and she greeted him blithely.

"I'm making hay, you see, in spite of the clouds. That's the value of having not too much 'temperament.' Kate has been in a restless rage all day. I think you're responsible for it, so you must get her out of it."

He turned an inquiring look upon the other woman. As if in answer, she brought from a corner a thick, black portfolio, and laid it upon a table at Matthew's side.

"There; look!" she cried. "Tell me what you think of it. I've worked hard and accomplished little. I don't know why, and I can't find out."

The portfolio was filled with the human figure. Matthew was puzzled and silent as he turned the first sheets, that held no more than sketched fragments—a man's muscled shoulders and arms, a girl's slender hand, an eye or an ear, with now and then a face or a body or a simple group rudely incomplete. There was no power in them, but only deftness of touch. It was as though a musician were touching the keys of a piano at random, bringing forth idle tones and caring nothing for harmonies.

But little by little, out of this chaos of line, themes began to appear; here a beautiful pose, and there a strong figure instinct with life and quick with living feeling. Then he came upon one that made him pause.

There was a background of summer sea and summer sky, the foreground a smooth stretch of beach dotted over with jocund bathers—laughing children, exquisite girls and handsome youths; the whole strong with sheer animal spirit, strong with golden light and brilliant color, strong with the ineffable gladness of care-free youth. The central figure was a lithe-limbed man, an athlete in form, an Adonis in beauty, who stood with lifted head and folded arms, his bared muscles full of latent power. It was skilfully done, and Matthew dwelt upon it long.

"Well?" the girl prompted, by and by. "There is something the matter with it; but what?"

He smiled into her perplexed eyes. "Your man ought to be doing something," he said quietly.

The worker at the easel interrupted gaily: "What's that? Your 'Bathers'? Well, but Kate was trying to translate the classic form into the terms of the present. That is the mold of the perfect

man. Can a poor mortal aim at anything better than perfection?"

He answered stoutly: "Better than such perfection. If a man cares for perfection, let him show it in his conduct, and not just in the shape of his legs. Let him put it into day's work."

"Oh, oh!" she cried jestingly. "Would you have the immortal gods turn plowmen?"

"Yes," he returned firmly. "Yes, if there's no other escape from idleness. God works, and why shouldn't your little godlings? I have come to think of heaven as a place made up of some strong workers who have earned their way there, and who know their own minds, and I think I could make a pretty fair hell out of a purposeless crowd of men like that one in the picture."

The older woman laughed, a quick, dry laugh. "Now go on and look at the others," she said.

On the next sheet was a picture that made him catch his breath. It was done in color, yet it had the effect of a monochrome—a gray sea invested with a thick, gray sea-fog, and a gray and bent old man in fisherman's garb trying to push a heavy boat into the water. His face was very ugly, the coarse features lined and marked and distorted by the things he had done and thought and suffered in his long life. His unkempt hair hung damp upon his wrinkled neck; his boots were clumsy and wet; his old eyes, turned toward the gray sky, were full of the dumb appeal of one who is forced to play a hard game through to the weary end, though the hard rules are hidden from his understanding. There was mastery in it; it gripped and held him.

The girl was observing his face eagerly.

"There is one of your workers," she said presently, when he did not speak. "I loved that while I was doing it; but now it satisfies me even less than the other. I feel that it's a failure, somehow, and I don't know why."

He closed the portfolio and pushed it from him.

"I have seen enough," he said quietly. Then, after a moment: "It is a great matter, and you must get it right. The very essence of life is in it. I know what is missing from your picture. If that old man could speak, with that look on his face, you'd hear a word of discouragement. Anybody who looks at him would think his fate hard and cruel, and would feel sorry for him and wish that he had an easier way to make a living. You have made him out a coward. It's only the coward who looks like that. You must put courage into your picture. Make your man's lot as hard as you like, and as bare and ugly; but let him keep his courage. It's only courage that can put meaning into it and make it great."

Her eyes were shining. "Do you think that's what it means to *him*?" she cried.

"Oh, no, most likely not. He doesn't think about it so clearly. It wouldn't be of any use to ask him to explain himself; he'd get it all wrong. He'd tell you that he goes fishing in his boat to get food for his stomach and to keep soul and body together. But he does better than that, if he's the right sort, though he doesn't know it."

He arose, smiling down upon her. "I am coming again, when you've had time to think it over," he said. "We shall meet often, I hope, while you're here."

They did meet often, and he found a strange joy in the meetings, as their intimacy grew. He had lived the best of his life within himself, making up his mind about things, and then, for want of a fit sharer, keeping his thoughts unspoken. This girl's spirit became to him as a whispering gallery, wherein his every quiet word awoke exquisitely delicate response.

He did not try to discover what this meant to him; it was enough to live each golden day to itself. Sometimes he would go to their farmhouse, when they stayed indoors; but he liked better to go with them over the hills or along the river, that he might sit by while they worked, talking between times. Once or twice he had offered to speak of the old fisherman; but the girl evaded

him. She was not ready for that, she said; it must wait.

One day, in one of his aimless walks, he came upon her alone, sitting at the riverside. She had not been working. A mass of wild flowers lay upon the sand at her side, and she was resting in an attitude of weariness. Before he joined her he knew that things had gone wrong.

"Can you tell me what's the matter?" he asked.

Impulsively she picked up a handful of sand and let it slip lightly through her fingers; then held her empty hand open.

"There! To-day I have felt so, and it isn't the first time. Oh, it is such a little time we have to make ourselves masters of our work and to get the work done! It seems so foolish to stake a few years of feeble effort against an eternity that will wipe it all away and let it be forgotten."

His face darkened, as she had known it would.

"I don't like that," he said, almost harshly. "Suppose Christ had said that, or Savonarola, or Galileo. You know you mustn't speak so."

"You are not fair," she returned. "You know I am not such as they."

"How do you know what you may be if you keep steadfast?"

"I feel that at the best my work must be only indifferent. The marks of my incapacity will be on everything I do; and the bigger the things I undertake, the plainer will be the signs of my shortcoming. Besides, my mortality makes demands upon me, and I can't help it. There is my sister. She makes what you call bad pictures; but they have brought her ten times my fame, and rewards more generous than I dare dream of."

"Hush!" he commanded. "That isn't like you at all. Do you think fame and rewards would content you? You'll get the rewards you earn, that's sure; and when you talk of your work passing away, that's nonsense. Men die, and we don't know what becomes of them; but their work remains forever, and not even Omnipotence can wipe it away. It

gets woven into other folks' lives, and its effects pass along to every generation that comes after. That's why we must make our work good. I don't mind telling you that that's why I believe in Christ—for His very work's sake; and I believe in myself for the same reason—because my work is so good that I can't make it any better. And that's the way you must feel, too."

She gave a little laugh that had in it something of a sigh and something of a sob. "Yes, yes, I know!" she breathed.

A little later, when they were parting, he said musingly: "I wish Christ had said, along with the rest: 'Blessed are they that do their work as well as they can and possess their souls in patience, for they know how God feels.' I think He would have said it, if it had occurred to Him."

There followed days when his own work claimed and held him, and when the meetings were abated. He found ever a supreme content in his tasks. It was only at evening, when the last light was gone and he rested from his bench, that there would come upon him a new, strange sense of incompleteness in the day, a feeling of desire unsatisfied. But he kept to himself, thinking, dreaming.

Then one morning she came to him at the shop. She appeared thin and worn; but there was that in her eyes which told him she had not been ill. She offered him her hand in greeting, a thing she had never done before, and as he held it in his own he felt that it trembled.

"I've been at work," she said. "I have something to show you. Please come, for I can't wait."

He looked again upon the picture he had seen on that other day; the same picture, yet transformed. The vast, eternal mystery was over the gray water beneath its veil of gray fog; the near beach was strewn with a drift of dead things brought up by the tide from the mighty depths; and there was the battered old boat, and beside it the bent old man in his worn clothes, getting ready for his day's work. The face was as it had been before, in its wrinkled ugliness of line and feature—the same, yet

transfigured, almost deified. The change was in the eyes. The mute agony of helplessness was gone; instead, there had come into them that look which has ever been the sign and token of man's lordliest dignity—the look which bespeaks the integrity of perfect fearlessness, the mastery of his soul. Neither life nor death had any terror for this rude fisherman; he was ready to dare his destiny with a stout heart.

At a glance Matthew saw what had been achieved; yet he stood for a long time without a word. And when at last he looked from the picture to the face of the painter, he did not speak at once; but she saw what he would say and exulted.

"You have made me glad!" he said. That was all; but again he took her hand in his, and like one doing homage he bent his head and touched her slight yet mighty fingers with his lips.

"Now you understand," he said, after a time. "There's nothing else you have to learn. When a worker has learned that, life has given up to him its greatest mystery. Now you will go on and on, with no more doubt or dismay, and you will find it all wonderful, joyful. You'll leave this place pretty soon; but I shall be hearing great things of you, wherever you are, and you'll know that I'm rejoicing with you."

She turned from him suddenly and went to the deep window, standing there with her gaze fixed upon the wide landscape, where the first crimson stains were showing upon the summer green.

"Yes," she said, as with an effort, "we must go soon."

In the cool dusk he sat before his open window, resting, while memory marshaled the past days in an ethereal processional. A curious heaviness of spirit was upon him, persisting and strengthening. He thought of what had come to her—the sure grasp of life and the new delight in power realized; but that did not drive away his mood.

"What is it?" he questioned.

Not by effort of his will, but like a quick answer to his question there arose before him in the dusk a mild and tender face with beautiful, grave eyes

looking into his. It came like an apparition, making his heart leap and sending the warm blood singing through his brain. He did not try to compel himself to think; he only suffered the fair image to stay, while his unchecked fancy dwelt upon its loveliness.

The night advanced; the full moon flooded the world with golden radiance; a clock somewhere in the neighborhood struck three, then four; and then the first limpid gray of the dawn stole over the deep violet sky, and still he sat in his place, brooding.

In the early morning he found her, walking beneath the trees about the farmhouse.

"Come!" he said, and took her hand in his, leading her away from the house and down the quiet road until they were shut away together in the heart of a calm solitude. Then he faced her exultantly.

"Listen!" he cried. "I must tell you something. I made a bad mistake yesterday; I found it out last night, when I got to thinking. I told you life had no mystery but the courage of work; do you remember? But there's another one and a greater one. It's love! No—wait! I know what I must say, and you must listen. There's no way out of it but for me to tell you. There's nothing to make you afraid. I love you. Do you wonder how I know, all at once? Why, that's the way we dis-

cover everything worth while—all in a flash. Last night I knew that I loved you that first day on the hill, when I stopped and spoke to you—even long before that, maybe; yes, I'm sure of it. Love isn't one of the accidents of meeting. If I hadn't loved you, do you think I could have told you the things I have? If you hadn't—if it hadn't been for love, do you think you could have understood as you did? Not in this world! It's love that quickens everything; without love, everything is dead."

She stood before him with bent head, her eyes cast down, her hands clasped. He read a vague trouble in her posture.

"Don't be afraid of me," he said gently. "Your life is apart from mine, I know, and you'll go your way and I'll go mine. But the time will come when you'll be glad to remember what I've said—when you've had time to understand."

A half-stifled syllable escaped her, and to his boundless dismay he saw that tears glistened upon her lashes.

"Oh, I didn't mean to hurt you!" he cried. "I thought I could say it without that."

"No, no!" she said in a choking whisper. With an impulsive movement she put forth her hand, raising her eyes to his; and from behind the mist of tears shone a wondrous radiance.

"Are you—so sure—our lives must lie apart?" she breathed.

APRIL

THE wet wind blows along the lane
A thrill of laughter faint and wild;
'Tis April come again—
Inimitable child!

She plays her pranks with every bud,
And haunts it like a frolic ghost:
But violets o' the wood
She teases most.

They open wide their wondering eyes;
She greets them with a shower of rain,
And then at their surprise
She laughs again.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING.

AS MARJORIE SAW IT

BY HARRIET WHITNEY DURBIN



OUR acquaintances are all mightily exercised over what they call "the Silverspear doings," and are quite breathless with wondering how this thing and that thing and the other thing happened.

I believe I know the facts pretty well, and think I can put them together decently and in order, though I am considered by my ancient relatives as barely out of the nursery. Anyway, I'll try it.

Grandma says Medora shouldn't have been allowed to come out so young. Papa says that, so far as he can gather, she didn't "come out" at all—she broke out; and there she was, flaunting two beaus in his face while he, wandering in the fogs of business, had been contentedly fancying her a bashful school miss in shoe-top skirts and floating sash-ribbons.

If it had been a case simply of Phil Millard, and Medora had said: "Papa, I love Phil; give me your blessing and some money to buy wedding truck with," I think he would have handed her over to Phil, and maybe added a premium in the shape of a nice little cottage with modern flounces and frills. For, as papa says, Phil is a respectable young man and knows beans when the bag is open.

But there was Wilmot Lucas. It was grandma who flashed the danger-signal in papa's astonished eyes, concerning Wilmot.

"What, that prehistoric Brummell," said papa. "Meddie wouldn't think of him. He might have proposed to you when you were a bud, mother."

Grandma tossed her misty-silver puffed head.

"I've had the refusal of his betters many a time, at any rate," said she. "But he has been proposing to every Silverspear girl he could scare up, for the last forty years back, at least."

"Well," papa decided easily, "as they all had the sense to decline, Med will, too, no doubt."

Grandma sighed dissentingly.

"The Silverspear women as a rule have been practical, and capable of distinguishing all-wool from cotton-mixed. Medora's wits run to knights errant and moated granges, so to speak. To a girl of that turn, an elderly bachelor with dismal purple eyes and impromptu yearnings for ideals never realized until he met *her*, appeals tremendously. Besides, he's elegant in appearance —"

"Don't pay his tailor for his duds," broke in papa wrathfully. "He's a mistletoe—er—what is it?—a parasite; wants to live on others, and he wouldn't work a lick to save his landlady from a provident society. But then," he cheered up again, "if he really wanted to be married he'd have found some ninny long ago who'd have taken him. He's simply got into the proposing habit. If Med were to accept him, more than likely he'd gig out of it."

"Every Napoleon runs into a Waterloo, if you give him opportunity

enough," said grandma, like a dismal oracle.

A worry-map came out on papa's forehead. "Then you think there is surely danger ahead?"

And said grandma as solemnly as if she were promising to love, honor and so on: "I do."

Papa got down to business.

"What'll head her off—orders—appeals—threats, or—Europe?"

"Not a one of them; and I don't know that anything will, but I've puzzled out an experiment that might be tried."

"Fetch it on."

"Get your sister-in-law, Ruth Clayton, here, ostensibly to chaperon her."

"Hey?" Papa looked as destitute of understanding as a yearling calf. "Why, Ruth's just like poor Leonie was—as mild and accommodating as a May breeze; Med would run over her in a jiffy."

Grandma waved both hands—her way of expressing irritation, because it doesn't wrinkle the face.

"Take notice, son, I said 'ostensibly.' So far as keeping a sharp eye on Medora goes, Ruth would be as useful as a fat sparrow. I can do that much, however, myself."

"Then what—"

"Oh, man, stupid man!" paraphrased grandma, not very politely if she hadn't been talking to her own son. "Listen: Did you ever know Wilmot Lucas so bedazzled by one woman that the appearance of a new one wouldn't toll him off, at least temporarily? Medora wouldn't stand a day's neglect; devotion is what catches her; and in that little jog of an interval, being left with only Phil, she might capitulate—constancy is his forte; he doesn't give the street dust a chance to settle between trips."

"Well—yes," considered papa, "the plan looks slick enough, provided Lucas would be so amiable as to fall into it. But I've noticed that the old gourd usually lights on a bud to wind his tendrils around. Isn't Ruth getting on a bit?"

"I shouldn't presume to count up your sister-in-law's years," said my wise

grandmama, "but Ruth Clayton will always discredit her age, whatever it is, and she'll never be beyond the admiration of some silly men; they always chase after that rosy-posy style of woman. Wilmot has never met her; his chronic dying-all-for-love habit will catch him up—and I hope before he gets to the proposing point with Medora. At any rate, it's a possibility."

Papa drummed considerably upon grandma's dressing-table.

"Ruth's a good girl," he came out of his pondering to remark, "and as simple-minded as a large infant. On poor Leonie's account, if no other, I wouldn't let her go into any pitfalls. Suppose she should actually capture Lucas' affections—and marry him?"

Grandma closed her eyes to any such mischance.

"I shouldn't take it hard if she did, but she won't; she wouldn't take him if he chased her like Cuffy." Grandma is sometimes a little free in her speech when alone with her family. "Ruth Clayton may be so rosy and round she looks squashy, but she has too solid a streak of the practical to accept a production like Wilmot. All's safe in that direction."

"Well, then," papa arose, and departing left behind him the ultimatum, "get Ruth here with all possible speed."

I always liked Aunt Ruth's nose; it is scooped out a very little—just enough to give it a nice, good-tempered curve; and she suits it; she is all good-tempered curves. She never wears tailor-made things, or stiff, tight collars; her dresses are always light-colored and soft and cool; she has little crushy mull and malines cascades about her neck that make you want to lean against them if you have a headache. You imagine pictures of her in long white aprons that smell like elder blossoms, standing at bedsides where people toss with fever, and touching her throbbing brows with cool, soft fingers. She calls stray little ragged children "Dear," and gives them ice-cream; she isn't afraid to pat a mule on the nose, and she takes lost dogs to her home and feeds them good

soup-bones. The Silverspears are mostly restless and dark and slim; and Aunt Ruth is serene and creamy and plump and happy; as poor mama used to be, who died.

Perhaps she was too cheerful for Wilmot Lucas; he inspected her dreamily with his languid purple eyes for about ten minutes, and then went right along hovering around Medora. But Phil Millard struck into a breezy chumminess with her from the first.

"She's such a sweet, big doll-baby of a woman," Phil said to grandma. "If she had on one of those high-necked aprons with big flat buttons down the back and a primer in her hand, wouldn't she be a dandy kindergarten kid?"

By the third week of Aunt Ruth's chaperonage grandma's dressing-table began to break out in little pink and white pots of "Magic Skin-food" and "Verbena Cream," and in spite of them grandma was getting new wrinkles at the rate of five a day.

"Cupid off the track?" papa asked her, looking out to where Aunt Ruth was gathering rose-leaves for her pot-pourri, and Phil was holding the basket.

"Cupid ought to be smacked," snapped grandma.

"That means the scheme leaks?"

"Like a sieve," Grandma groaned. "Notice Phil's grin of illumined lunacy and Ruth's smile-that-won't-come-off look! Wilmot and Medora are paddling joyously on the river. Is it any wonder my hooks all have to be set back?"

"I'll have to talk to Ruth; she evidently didn't know Lucas was to be hers."

Grandma's hands flew up emotionally. "Never try to drive a hen the way you want her to go," said she, with conviction. "If you do she'll fly all over creation, and play the mischief with things she hadn't thought of before."

"Quite so, ma'am," papa assured her; "but Ruth isn't a fowl, exactly."

"Yes, she is, too," contradicted grandma; "and let me tell you, that a large, stately, benevolent hen is no more dependable than a snippy little pullet that

screeches and cackles every time she sees an angleworm. If there isn't any mischief in Ruth's head now you'll put it there by meddling; and if it is there you'll stir up her obstinacy. I know by the looks of her she can be as tenacious as a bunch of durdock."

"Maybe," conjectured papa, "she lets Phil dangle out of charity; she appears to love the universe. Hasn't she got Lucas in any kind of line at all?"

"She doesn't budge a finger to get him there," said grandma disgustedly. "When she sees him at all you might suppose he was a green worm in somebody's cabbage-garden. And he looks at her with no more interest than if she was one of the cabbages, and he was wondering whether she was an Early York or a Flat Dutch. Sometimes I begin to hope they might get interested enough to try to solve each other; but then Phil comes butting in with a dandelion or a horse-nettle, or some fool thing to toll Ruth off, and away go Wilmot and Meddie to sail or ride or walk—and there's your fine scheme in tatters. If Ruth——"

"Hi!" papa interrupted, with a spring. "Phil's clean disappeared, and Ruth's looking as innocent as if she had licked the cream off the milk. I'm right in the mood to do the Dutch uncle act——"

"Here—stop!" shrilled grandma, as he pelted off. "Haven't I been telling you——"

"Yes'm; but with all veneration, Ruth isn't a hen," he shouted back, still traveling.

Grandma did a kind of Indian dance, merely for her own relief.

"Oh," she groaned, "how I wish men had as much judgment as plain black water-beetles. He'll not only put his foot in the muddle—he'll butt the whole business into a cocked hat. I'm done with the list of boobies. See here, Marjorie"—she snapped me up as suddenly as if she had been a crab—"if you ever let out a word you may hear your father and me say about Medora's affairs I'll stop your allowance of pocket-money for a month."

I have been taught to respect age,

and I do. And I have seen pictures of grandmas in books, with lovely, smooth white hair and sweet, wrinkly faces like faded flowers. They make me love old age. I have also been taught not to criticize my elders; but I do want to just say that those picture-grandmas do not look as if they claw out right, and left whenever they are irritated.

There came a gloriously rainy morning when no visitor could possibly be expected and grandma could go into retirement and darn her laces in comfort and safety. Medora got out the "Rubaiyat" and lolled on the sitting-room couch, and Aunt Ruth came trailing in, looking like a large pink morning-glory. She had four sharp, new knitting-needles in her hand, and a great ball of gray yarn under her arm.

"Sarepta's father wears yarn stockings on account of rheumatism," she answered the interrogation-point in Meddie's face. Sarepta sews for grandma, and Aunt Ruth pried into her affairs and found out about her invalid father.

"Oh," Medora murmured, behind her book. "The rain is profitable to somebody, then, if it *has* spoiled the morning dialogue on the lawn."

Aunt Ruth, with three knitting-needles in her mouth, was casting stitches on the other one, chanting numerals as she went. Between "eight" and "nine" her lashes went up and then down very quickly, and while they were up a look went twinkling at Medora that said: "Ha, have I made a discovery?" though she didn't say a word with her lips, just smiled evenly, and began counting stitches on another needle.

"What's the rain spoiled for *you*?" I asked Meddie, rather snippishly, I own.

She answered quite promptly:

"An auto ride and maybe a proposal—if it's any of your business."

"Of course it's my business," I told her, "for if you should say 'Yes,' I'd miss out on my turn to be proposed to by Mr. Lucas, and I want to know how it goes."

"You'd better be thinking how your

music-lesson goes," said Meddie. "You'll never find out about the other." Another curious twinkle shot from under Aunt Ruth's lifted lashes; Medora caught that one, and the "Rubaiyat" fell onto Muffy's paw and made him yell; then Meddie's blue-and-white kimono switched huffily out of the room.

The next morning's sunshine looked clean after its bath, and the roses on the lawn were like wet crimson plush. Some, in masses of loosened flakes, threatened to go showering at a breath, and Aunt Ruth tied the blue ribbon strings of a big mushroom hat under her chin, and hurried out with a dishpan and a pair of shears to save the petals. Medora took herself and her ribbony little humbug of a work-basket to the woodbine summer-house.

Soon after, Phil Millard's light-running red car came waltzing along the road as if it wanted to twirl on its toes. Aunt Ruth was square in Phil's path when he pranced up the winding way from the gate, and grandma, all unknown to them, peeked scissors out of an upper window as they stood talking.

But pretty soon we—I was at the other window—saw Aunt Ruth turn serenely around and go on snipping at the big loose roses, while Phil swung up the path and plump into the summer-house where Med was.

"For the land sakes!" said grandma, as glibly as if she had been her own great-aunt from Kennebunkport, and she sat down behind a blind with the slats turned, so she could see without being seen.

In a few minutes we heard a pompous "chuff-chuff" heading down the street. Wilmot Lucas' car is a long, low one—like descriptions of Captain Kidd's craft—very cushiony, and so proud of itself you can distinguish its chuffing from that of any common auto.

Aunt Ruth was still in the path, snipping at the same bush—I noticed later what a lot of green leaves and stems were in the pan. Being so large and unmistakable, she could not be overlooked, and he couldn't very well

edge past her, as he at first seemed inclined to do; so he stood chatting with her. Aunt Ruth's voice is even and slow, and she can babble on like a little brook in a meadow—every minute you think she is going to stop, but she ripples right along, and you keep listening. When she finally moved on to another rose-bush, Mr. Lucas moved politely along with her; after a while he did not seem to want to get away from her, but went trotting after her of his own accord, like a pet lamb.

"Look, grandma," I said, after a bit, "he's pointing to his car; can he be going to take her riding?"

"I wouldn't put it past her," grandma observed darkly; but she did not look vexed. At that precise moment, Med looked out of the summer-house, saw me at the window, and called sweetly: "Marjie, please bring me a hat, dear—one that won't fly off easily, will you?"

"That means an auto hat," I said, hopping up. "They're going, too."

"Marjorie," grandma called after me, "don't you take her any old skull-cap kind of a thing; take the little flary hat with pink ribbons—never mind if it is fly-away and jumps off. When you give it to her lope off so quick she can't make objections—you hear?"

I heard, and I was so nimble in following instructions that I was back upstairs in time to see Phil and Med strolling down the walk, Med dangling the pink hat by the brim. Wilmot Lucas and Aunt Ruth had started to the gate, too, and the four of them vanished behind the stone dragons' wings together. Phil's car started off first, and went waltzing along, with Aunt Ruth's blue ribbons fluttering out from her mushroom garden hat, and in Mr. Lucas' brown car, prancing after, was Med's flary pink hat and the bit of flopping veil on it, jiggling about like a pink and gray moth.

When I peeped over at grandma she had "relaxed" beautifully; but not, I think, with any Delsarte rules in mind; she was limp, but not happy-looking. The most unpleasant thing to me about beauty rules is that you must never

look the way you feel, no matter how worried you are, because it will make you wrinkle.

Now, if grandma could have scowled comfortably and had it over, her face would not have kept such a strained look. And possibly she would not have fallen upon papa in such an electric-battery kind of way when he came home to luncheon. She did not give him a chance to take a drink of water before she went at him, full tilt, dancing up and down and shouting that she knew as well as if she saw the clerk handing out the license that Med and Lucas had eloped; that Aunt Ruth had purposely misled her—grandma—by talking to Wilmot on the lawn and walking to the gate with him; that the four had made it all up among them; that Aunt Ruth and Phil had either eloped, too, or were aiding and abetting the other pair of scamps, and that if papa wanted to save his daughter from the talons of a boa-constrictor—I don't know where grandma studied natural history—he would better scramble back into his car and scamper after them, lickety-split.

Papa was all moist and red from the warm weather, and he ventured the opinion that possibly the affair might not be so serious as grandma feared, and that it would be as well to let the chase wait until after luncheon, anyway. Grandma would not listen to that; she compromised far enough to let him have a glass of buttermilk, but she said she did not know how a man could heartlessly drink buttermilk when his child was being devoured by a serpent.

Only the cooky-box saved me from famishing that day, for grandma refused to have luncheon served until papa came back. He was very warm and hungry when he did come, but he was not allowed to have one spoonful of bouillon until he told whether he caught Lucas and Med before they were married.

"Yes, I did," he hurled, and wouldn't tell another word until he got to the cold roast beef, when he grumbled about a poor starving man chasing

around the country after four well-fed people that had lunched comfortably at the Wild Hunters' Tavern, out the pike.

Why hadn't he fetched them home, then, grandma asked, and what business had Ruth Clayton jiggering off with Phil, anyway?

"She didn't." Papa was coming to iced melon and was getting more talkative. "You got fooled by the hats; the girls had traded——"

"You don't mean——"

"Yes; Meddy wanted Ruth's hat because it tied on better, and Ruth didn't care. Med went with Phil and Ruth with Lucas, but you sorted 'em by the ribbons; both the girls had on white rigging, I believe."

"La!" said grandma, and began to look natural. "Where did you find them, son?"

"Didn't find any one but Ruth," papa told her. "Lucas had contrived to run over a stray dog's paw, and Ruth was sitting on a stile in a lane consoling the dog, while Lucas was hunting the veterinary surgeon she had sent him after."

"And you left her there?"

"Had to; she wouldn't leave the animal until it could be fixed up, and I hadn't had any lunch. She said Phil and Med had gone out the pike."

I found, when I went out to the veranda after I finished my luncheon, that Aunt Ruth had come and was sitting on the step looking as cheerful as the moon and not bothering an atom about her mussy skirt.

Phil's car was just galloping off down the street, and Medora was coming along the walk in skips, singing like a school-girl:

"Skip, hop to the barber-shop
To buy a stick of candy;
One for me and one for you
And one for sister Mandy."

She stopped at the step, and instead of skipping in, she suddenly dumped herself down in a bunch and began rumpling Aunt Ruth's neck fixings by burrowing frantically into them with her head. I was afraid she was going to cry on aunty, though I couldn't see

what for; and a drop of water simply spoils chiffon. Aunty was no more disturbed than a white swan would be if a fluffy young chicken snuggled against it. She began to pat out the little curly tags of Med's hair that flew about with her finger-tips, and to talk as if Med was a sick baby.

"Poo' little sing—did she get all tangled up, and think her big old bad aunty was a pirate on the high seas, and her own true-love a bunch of feathers blowing about whichever way the wind puffed?"

"Yes—she did—she did; and sillier, meaner things than that about them both." Med wept without paying a particle of attention where the moisture went. "And now that she has got her silly eyes open a wee bit—just enough to realize her own stupidity—she feels little enough to creep into a snail-shell and wizzle up. Moles and bats are wide-awake creatures alongside of your niece, Aunt Ruth. And snapping turtles are amiable compared with her. She don't deserve that you should give her lover back to her——"

"Shoo!" interrupted Aunt Ruth, in her soft, easy voice. "I didn't. Never had him to give back."

"You came mighty near it, then. He—he owned up that he did take a great fancy to you."

"Don't care what he owned, sissy. It was all in the aunt-in-law way. And don't you know that a man's fancy can float any which way with the current, like rushes in a stream, while his love is anchored in the soil as safe as a bank? You'd made him apple-green with jealousy of Wilmot Lucas in the first place, and it took a lot of tongue-exercise to put him straight. You couldn't blame him for having drifted about a bit. You didn't let any foolishness stand between you and him, to-day?"

"No-o—I couldn't." Med sat up in a sparkle, and whisked off the last little side-tracked tear with her handkerchief. "I—I like Phil too well. Are you just as sure as ever can be, Aunt Ruth, that he's really, truly anchored?"

"Tight as tar," said Aunt Ruth.

Med sat looking down into the rose-garden, with her face as happy and bloomy as one of the roses; but by and by she stole a sideway glance at Aunt Ruth that seemed a little questioning.

"Aunty," she began, and kept her eyes down on her shoe-toes.

"Yes, what more, sissy?" Aunt Ruth smiled patiently, and then Meddie spoke very slowly, getting redder all the time:

"You are—you aren't—unhappy, aunty?"

Aunt Ruth's laugh reminds me of our cathedral chime, but this time it was clearer and more ringing, and all over her face and throat came a color that made her look like a strawberry ice.

"Unhappy!" she said. "Me? Why, sissy, I have a guilty feeling that I am monopolizing a good deal more than my share of happiness to-day, for—I'm anchored, too."

"Oh, ho!" giggled Medora, beginning to look wise all of a sudden. "Then there must have been a double and twisted tangle all around, if it's Wil-mot—"

I saw I had a grievance, and I came out with it at once:

"Oh, yes, you two, you're both anchored so nice and comfortable that everybody else may go whistle. As for me, I suppose I'll never know what it's like to have a proposal, now that Wil-mot Lucas has slipped through my fingers."

Aunt Ruth laughed harder and grew redder for several minutes before she could speak.

"I wouldn't worry my little noddle about proposals just yet, Marjie," she said at last. "You've got quite a bit of time to spare, my dear; you might occupy it profitably with your lessons, and also by being a companion to your grandma when Meddie's gone, and your papa married."

"Papa! Married! Why, who's papa going to marry?" I shouted, and Meddie shouted, too, in nearly the same words.

Aunt Ruth sat and twisted her hat-ribbons around her fingers and looked dreamy, while Med and I held our breath until we nearly turned blue.

"Me," she said sweetly, at last.



AT LAST

KISS down my eyes—

lest they should wake
Upon the vine shade of my village wall;
Lest as in parted dawns the slow day break,
And heartless pleasures, weary duties call!

Kiss down my eyes—

lest far from thee,
Along some luring, unsuspected way,
A new delight or glory-flash I see,
This one impassioned blindness to betray.

Then cease to kiss—

that I my eyes
May raise to thine and know the past is past;
Beyond the tyranny of waking lies
Our love's far dreamland-kingdom—won at last!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.

IN MUSICLAND

By William F. Armstrong




It was at a little summer resort in the Black Forest, five hours' drive from the railway, in a valley so still that a brawling brook disturbed the night, that I first heard Miss Geraldine Farrar. She had come up with her mother from Switzerland, where her holiday time had meant study, to sing to Madame Nordica. The next autumn she was to try her wings at the Berlin Opera.

The stage-setting was the Hunters' Room, hung with antlers and trophies; at one end a piano of long bygone vintage; about the wall a row of seats for the auditors; in the center of the floor a single wooden chair, and in front of it Miss Farrar knelt to sing the church scene from Gounod's "Faust."

There was not an item of suggestion to help to illusion; even the sunlight streamed in through the windows, hard and uncompromising. Only the great calm of nature that dwelt in the air and on the mountainside was in sympathy.

In that surrounding the girl conjured up the half-lit church, the organ, the kneeling crowd and the desolation of *Marguerite*. At first the listeners, more influenced than she by outward incongruities, failed to fall into her mood of realization. Before she had sung long she began to draw them with her, to

make them share in the reality that she had created. Her youth, her beauty, her face from which the color had faded, the tears rolling down her cheeks, the increasing intensity in her fresh voice, as the scene grew, brought a more girlish, a sincerer *Marguerite* to us than our stage acquaintance had been used to give.

There were little crudities that experience was presently to prune away, but there were the voice, the heart-impelled action, the genuineness, and the outlook of eager, serious faith that makes youth so adorable.

In the autumn Berlin took her into its heart, and helped her grow up to the stature in which she came home to us. And that is just what we lose in America—the growing up with the artist in her art. We pride ourselves on accepting only ultra-developed greatness with very much the same blindness that we should deride in people who preferred adopting the grown-up children of others, to save the trouble of rearing ones of their own.

In the old days at Carlsruhe in Baden, there was a little singer, *Fräulein Bianchi*; when she drove through the streets to the theater to sing "*La Fille du Régiment*," her basket of costumes with drum on top, on the box by the driver, smiles of sympathy lighted the way as she passed. Later, a full-fledged prima donna, her art conquered Vienna, but none need ever tell me that the

same intimate sympathy existed then that the Carlsruhers were privileged to indulge in earlier, in the days when they watched Bianchi working with all her might and charm to "arrive." They did not waste time in splitting argument as to whether the way she did things was quite flawless; it would be, later—that assurance sufficed; meanwhile, theirs was the joy of seeing how quickly and effectively she responded, like the unfolding of a child or a flower.

It was the recalling of that early flight of Miss Farrar that brought from her this expression: "We may not live to see the day, but in fifty years there will be another national standpoint. Musical taste is well progressed, but what we need here is an appreciation of the intermediate. Abroad, they stake confidence, love, everything on the young singer. Why not at home? In time, I think, the public here will be educated and desirous to take the half-blown bud as well as the rose. Then, too, when the 'rose' point of development is reached, the physical no longer fully responds to the mental. Besides this, the joy of watching the unfolding is the joy that yours is a part in it; that you, too, have helped and encouraged it.

"The times are strenuous, and require, perhaps, the situation just as it is; the artist has to remain away until she is ready to face supercritical, and hypercritical, demands.

"Abroad, the inspiration given the young singer tides her over; here, if one does not sing well once, one wants to hide one's head under the bedclothes."

It was all very genuinely, impersonally spoken of a situation that the thoughtful fully realize, and as fully regret.

Of this youngest of American-born prima donnas, who very early got far enough up in the scale of finish to venture home again, the brief history has been written in an ephemeral way. Of her personality and mentality singularly little has been said.

Energy and ambition may not be interchangeable words, but with her they are identical, the one is the motive pow-

er of the other. As she puts it: "Life without ambition would be unsatisfying. I should hunger to do something because the energy in me demands an outlet. If it should be, as I pray may never happen, that I lose my voice, I should turn to the dramatic stage; failing that, I should try writing. But I should have to be associated in some way with the lime-light."

In the next sentence the healthful ambition of youth was tempered by a calm knowledge of the toll it exacts: "If I have my health and keep on, which means uphill work, I think I can do something, I *know* I can do something." For the artist who has worked to arrive knows that to keep on arriving is the only way to survive.

"Sincerity," she added again, "is the biggest thing in the world; be yourself, not a copy of tradition, be as true as you can in all that you do. It may be crude, but it will be the truth, and the elemental always touches.

"I am not advancing in this self-reliance a creed that will upset any student; independence is the first rule to thought. The more you would do, the more you must have your brain balanced. The brain helps one climb over things, while in reality one is saving oneself."

A pagan, Miss Farrar once declared herself, with longings for an untrammelled freedom that would allow her to sleep indoors or under the sky; to wear laces one day and the next rags, if she willed it. But her type of mind is not of the fantastic or indefinite, there is nothing complex in its workings; it is calmly logical and strong; its traits are sharply defined, and once decided on a course her purpose is masterful.

In some things in life she has been disillusioned, with the resulting keen hurt that is youth's, but to others, with the right that is youth's, she holds fast, "Youth," as she expresses it, "is the greatest illusion of all. There is the eternal compensation; the *Manon* of today may be the *Donna Anna* of tomorrow; the *Carmen* of yesterday may become an *Isolde*. Art is the supreme acme of illusion. But when you cannot

produce the still greater illusion of youth, it is finished.

"I want to go on and culminate in some glorious performance, say nothing to any one, and disappear—to let the public keep its illusions.

"Look at Mary Anderson, and none can remember one unlovely tone that Annie Louise Cary ever sang.

"At such an ending of my career I want to begin a new life, a life of travel, to see, to observe, which means so much. And some day, at the end of it all, if you should read of a stout old lady, with a grizzled wisp of hair being massacred in Thibet or somewhere, that old lady will likely be I."

The period of meridional glory in the prima donna's career is the shortest in any profession, excepting that of the prize-fighter. The arduous period of building up and the still longer one of reluctantly giving up make the larger share of her grand total.

Even a man modest in confessing to the exact number of his birthdays feels free to count, if not the rise, the eclipse of three generations of prima donnas. And the worst of it is that the great singer, especially in this brief period of her prime, is allowed singularly little pleasure in her instrument: it is always a source of anxiety to her.

In the face of this brevity and insecurity, there is oftener a complete forgetting, in the sunshine of to-day, the rain that may follow to-morrow.

The coloratura soprano, the class from which we would least expect it, is really the wise virgin in finance; Madame Patti, Madame Melba, Madame Sembrich and Madame Nilsson are all proof against any wolfish invasion; Madame Gerster's career was an exception, vocally sadly cut off as she was before the golden harvest had time to ripen.

The coloratura soprano is still the best paid of singers, aside from the tenor of a kind that happens so seldom that he can scarcely be reckoned.

The great general public, and a fair proportion besides, care more for a good cadenza that they do for *Eliza-*

beth's "Prayer" or *Brünhilde's* "Immolation." And it requires this goodly company to fill the theater. In view of these facts and her consequent importance, if the famous coloratura's head is sometimes turned, as may be but natural, that she still keeps fast hold on her pocketbook in the proceeding is all the more to her credit.

Madame Tetrassini, the latest to blaze overnight into glory, put as much meaning into her words as she does into her runs when she said this: "The singer is too often apt to look on what she earns as merely an interest on her powers. In that she makes a mistake, it is her principal that she is drawing upon."

Then she smiled as she voiced this paradox: "But whether I am rich or not, I am always rich when I sing." Her art still means the best thing in life to her.

But here is the realization, to paraphrase Goethe, that life is longer than art. She had just spoken, with an awed sorrow, of good singers grown old who starved of hunger in Italy, and of others in Germany whose misfortune was scarcely lighter.

To know Madame Tetrassini is to know that her head is quite firmly set on her shoulders. Without mental balance, no woman could sing herself into tremendous success in a night, as she did, and look out with calmness on the world the next morning. Few of us, as much as we might like it, could make the experiment and come through as bravely.

Of the eleven years that she has been singing, four were spent where she sprang into her first real success at the Teatro Reale in Madrid in "La Jolie Fillé de Perth." After that the highest tide in a financial sense came in South America, not so long ago, with two hundred thousand francs for forty performances. In London she made her recent début in an off season at modest recompense; she returns for twenty-four performances at three hundred pounds for each appearance. Her New York engagement at the Manhattan is stated as at almost double that figure.

Her rise, for the type of her voice, has been slower than that of her class, but the end, with her keen good sense, will find her among the vocally affluent, affluent vocalists. The wisdom that sustained her after "La Jolie Fille de Perth" is unimpaired by "Traviata."

Madame Tetrzzini is simple, lovable, womanly, totally unaffected, wholly feminine, of the type that men like to shield. Absolutely happy at success, her simplicity is quite unaffected by it. Her mood from morning to night is of unchanging, good-natured gaiety. She looks out on the world with an amused confidence, like a child who has never known punishment.

There is not a flower or a wreath to remind you that her drawing-room is the drawing-room of the singer. As to troubles, only two things worry her—and perhaps equally—being photographed and the last few minutes before the curtain rises, when anxiety seizes her so grippingly that she thinks no money can compensate for it.

When you question her, you are likely to get an answer so naive that it is startling, but so literal that it is an index to her mind.

Some one pressed her for advice on the way a young girl should study. "If she has a voice, let her sing," was the prompt rejoinder. And there the matter ended for Madame Tetrzzini.

One day she put her whole simple philosophy of the voice into these words: "A teacher can tell you what to do and what not, but to be a singer you must have color, color, always color in the voice. No teacher can give you that, it must be born in you, it comes from the Grand Professor in the sky."

At her home in Paris I met her one afternoon. "I am Madame Strakosch," she said, as she came into the drawing-room, slight of figure, of medium height, and about her an air of pronounced distinction. It was Amalie Patti-Strakosch, and sister of the great Adelina and Carlotta Patti, the only one of the famous trio content to give up the stage for domesticity.

For many years she has lived in re-

tirement. Her noted husband, who was called by the French the "Columbus of Voices," because of the great singers he had discovered and managed, had more to do with the making of Madame Patti's career than any man living.

That afternoon Madame Strakosch began at once to talk of the old days when the Academy of Music was the center of New York's operatic glories, and of the time when four of her family would appear there in the cast on a single evening.

"In 'Norma,'" she said, as an instance, "my mother would sing the title part, my father *Pollio*, I the *Adelghisa*, and Adelina would appear as one of the infants. We were a large family, eight children, and what will the prima donna of to-day say, when I tell that my mother nursed every one of us? By her first marriage there were four Barillis, three boys and a girl, and by the second three girls and one boy. We three Patti girls, Adelina, Carlotta and I, all sang; the boy Carlo was a violinist.

"When the opera season was over, we would go from city to city, my mother, Adelina and I, in a stage, and give concerts. One night I remember I had great applause. Little Adelina's eyes shot fire. 'You think you are something,' she exclaimed, stamping her foot, 'wait until they hear me!'"

The history of the little Adelina was still very fresh in her mind, her varying moods, her constant presence in her mother's dressing-room at the Academy, for she was too tiny then to be left at home, and her singing of the big arias from the old repertoire.

"The 'Cavatina' from 'Ernani' was a great favorite with her; you know it?" And Madame Strakosch began it, without accompaniment, giving all the runs and roulades with the grace and charm of the *bel canto* that Wagner and the modern Italians put on the shelf from which they took down the brasses. The voice was the Patti voice, the sister to Madame Adelina's in its fluency, its color, and its facility. Had she not chosen to give up the stage for the home she might have made a great career.

How old is Madame Strakosch? She is very young; her voice proves it; her memory, which runs back to the forties and beyond, with all the facility of her scales, must have been born before she was.

And she was singing *Azucena* in "Il Trovatore" when Madame Adelina was seven!

"When Adelina heard me on her last stay in Paris, she said that it was a shame that I never practised," she ventured, with naïveté almost girlish and a momentary unbending of the elegant reserve of her manner.

"Why did you give up singing?" I asked bluntly, conscious that her place should likely be in the niche with her famous sister.

"Never tell," she said, with sly humor in her smile, "never tell, but I was lazy."

Years of Maurice Strakosch's life were absorbed by Madame Patti's interests; he was her teacher; the cadenzas that he wrote for her she sang throughout her career; her successes were made solely in the rôles that he taught her, every part that she learned after he left her was a failure.

"My husband was Adelina's teacher, her only one," Madame Strakosch said presently. "He began to train her when she was thirteen; he taught her all her operas; for seven years he left me in America, because our children were too young to travel, that he might devote himself to building up her career in Europe."

"And yet she ascribes to Ettore Barili the credit of her training."

"Yes, I know," she interrupted gently. "I cannot understand why Adelina says that Ettore Barili was her teacher. He played her accompaniments sometimes, but my husband was the one who taught her all, everything."

There was a dignified gentleness in the statement, and a serene self-command, as if in impersonal contemplation of injustice done to a stranger.

Both Madame Calvé and Madame Gerville-Réache come to us from the

Basque Provinces, where face and temperament take on an aspect more Spanish than French. Both studied for a time with the same teacher, who brought about a meeting between the two, and that meeting came near to excluding all idea of a singer's career from the life of Madame Gerville-Réache.

To understand the situation more fully one should know that her father, M. Gerville-Réache, was a Frenchman of the old school, trained in the diplomatic service, a colonial governor in several far-away parts of the world, and who took with him always his brood of small children, educating them largely himself, and amid adventures that would compare creditably with those of the "Swiss Family Robinson."

Through it all he held fast to his ideas of decorum and etiquette, and nurtured the charm of exquisite breeding that Madame Gerville-Réache carries with her.

She was only fifteen, when, one fine day her teacher sent her to sing to Madame Calvé, to them an absolute stranger, and already well on in her successes. Those who know Madame Calvé know also that she generally reverses the preconceived way of doing things. She did it that morning. No sooner was the song of the young girl ended than she gathered, not the daughter, but the decorous colonial governor in an embrace of true Basqueian fervor, planted a resounding kiss on both cheeks, and proclaimed that the operatic stage was the chosen spot in the world for his child to grow up in.

It took a long time, and days of anxiety, to convince him of the wisdom of this decision; the memory of the embrace that had accompanied it, lingered; he considered it as, perhaps, part of that profession so warmly recommended.

Finally, he relented, either from argument or sense of humor, and Madame Gerville-Réache slipped into the song-world in Gluck's "Orphée" at the Paris Comique.

Before that her experience of life had been gathered in far-away, uncivilized

corners of the world, with longings always for Paris, the geographical center of adoration for all true French hearts. When she played with her small sister and brothers in Tahiti or Madagascar, it was always to Paris that they were returning, and every sail that fluttered out of sight was, to their minds, making for that same fair haven.

"There was nothing but vegetation," is the simple, confidential way that Madame Gerville-Réache describes those lands of exile. But the colonial governor carried always with him, even to Comores, the one consolation to a Frenchman otherwise inconsolable on his travels, a Parisian cook. At table, too, another branch of their education than the gastronomic, itself important enough, was prosecuted. At the close of meals the father would read aloud from some serious book, and the children were called on to discuss it. It was a simple plan, but an effective one; Madame Gerville-Réache is a delightful, widely informed conversationalist, and no small degree of this accomplishment is undoubtedly due to early excellent soups and entrées, which afforded a mental stimulus that no vegetation, uncooked, could ever offer.

Now and then, in the intermissions of the governor's visits to the colonial office in Paris, Madame Gerville-Réache studied in a boarding-school there, but the real, solid foundations of learning she confesses were gained by her on various islets, just outside different harbors; for on the journeys from barbarous lands people acquired unique illnesses that kept the sound voyagers also in quarantine for indefinite periods, and in these their father turned with them again to books as man's most loyal advisers.

Through all these experiences Madame Gerville-Réache gained the charming spirit of camaraderie and developed the sense of humor that you find so buoyantly present with army people,

traits that make them the best-wearing, most delightful of friends. And with her, alongside this cheerfulness that accepts any situation with equanimity, and a cultured mentality, there is that other culture which people owe to their ancestors, the only known source from which to acquire it.

One day, in Madagascar it was, Madame Gerville-Réache, her sister, and their aunt planned an excursion to distract them, a visit, unattended, to the hut of a cannibal chief; when the true French mind plans distraction its lines are apt to be striking.

When they arrived the good man was about sitting down to his dinner, but he welcomed them anyway, though his pleasure might have been greater had their place been upon his humble board instead of beside it. The menu was fish, savored with mystery. Being ingenious, Madame Gerville-Réache put her share inside her umbrella, when the host was not looking, paying later the penalty that politeness so often suffers by walking home in the sun unprotected, because she feared to open it, and perhaps hurt his feelings.

"And what did your father say when you returned?" I asked, apropos of the episode.

"To this day," she answered, convulsed with laughter, and putting her hands in front of her face, "I don't allow myself to think of *quite* all he said before he finished. But I will confess this—I hope it won't hurt you—at some American hotels I have dined at I have wished for that same umbrella."

"And what is the difference," I questioned again, "between the civilized man and the savage one?" For it is seldom that one finds a clever woman who has observed, as it were, the whole range of the species.

"The difference is not very great," was her gay answer. "The older I grow, the greater resemblance I see between them."

EASY AS KISSING

By Mary E Mann



SIX sisters, and all married! The last of 'em, turned off last week, making the best marriage of the lot. And she only just nineteen. Pretty good business!" the boy said. He lay in the easiest chair in the room, head in the middle of its back, legs stretched before him, toes ceiling-ward.

"Your mother, one would have thought, would have liked to keep some of her daughters with her," his aunt commented.

"She's got me. I'm enough for her. You see, she hasn't got to fuss about their clothes, or trotting them out to parties, any more. She can take a little rest now, she says. Why don't you marry off Floy?" the nephew asked. "I shouldn't think it would be very much trouble."

Mrs. Patmore thumped the blotting-paper upon the wet ink of the letter she was writing, and threw at the boy a disapproving glance. "Whenever your cousin Florence marries," she said, "she will be married—simply that, not married off. Two very different arrangements."

"I don't see that, Aunt Sara."

"I dare say you don't. I do."

"Well, why don't you marry her then—without the 'off'?"

"The reason Florence has not married hitherto," Mrs. Patmore explained, a hint of acrimony in her voice, "is because she does not choose to do the sort of things other girls stoop to, to get husbands. She will not lift a finger to attract any man, nor stir a step out of

her path to pursue him. She does not flatter him, nor brag about herself, nor get herself talked about in connection with him, in order to entrap him into making her an offer."

"Of course not!" Henry said, with easy acquiescence. "Other people have to do those things for her, you see."

Mrs. Patmore laughed with scorn. "You mean that I should stoop to do them? No, thank you, Henry."

"Then, Floy won't get married," Henry said; and he meditatively lifted first one heel, then the other, and dropped it heavily on the hearth-rug.

"Girls with respect for themselves, with proper dignity, don't put themselves about to attract men," Mrs. Patmore went on, talking now more for her own satisfaction than for the boy's. "And men are such idiots, they can't see for themselves when a woman is good and charming and desirable, and would make a splendid wife. A girl without an ounce of brains, or a fraction of good looks or character, but, with what he calls 'ways' gets hold of a man, drives him into a corner, gabbles to him, hunts him, *wills* him to marry her; while the delightful woman who would understand him, would suit him, the woman with proper pride——"

"Remains single," Henry said.

"Well—yes," his aunt, not without bitterness, admitted.

"And Floy's getting on, isn't she?"

"No!" said Mrs. Patmore sharply. "Florence is twenty-eight. A woman, Charles Reade said, had not reached her loveliest, most lovable age, till she was thirty-three."

"But I think she'd better try to get married before then," Henry said.

"What about that man who dined here last night, Aunt Sara?"

"What do you mean by 'what about him'?"

"He seemed an awfully decent sort."

"He is, I believe. But Mr. Coverley is a newcomer; I know very little of him."

"He seemed rich. Talked a lot about his horses. Got any motors?"

"Two, I believe. He's taken the Rookery for a shooting-box; he's got a moor in Scotland, and a house in——"

"How'd he do? For Floy, I mean?"

Mrs. Patmore laughed in spite of herself. "You *have* been brought up in a bad school, Henry! All this 'marrying off' of your sisters has turned your brain. For goodness sake, don't let Florence or your uncle hear you talk such rubbish!"

"But should you like him to marry Floy—if it didn't hurt her 'proper pride,' and all that, Aunt Sara?"

Mrs. Patmore made a row of dots thoughtfully on her blotting-paper. "Some chattering, noisy, vulgar little husband-hunter will pick up Mr. Coverley," she said ruminatively. "He is one of those modest, shy men who fall an easy prey to the women who take a little trouble with them. And Florence—you saw, last night?—she did not condescend to speak three words to him, I think."

"Look here, Aunt Sara—how long is it to Christmas? What'll you bet me she isn't engaged to him by Christmas Day?"

"All I'm worth, my dear boy," Mrs. Patmore said, smiling over the dots on her blotting-paper.

"Will you bet five pounds?"

"Ridiculous boy!"

"I'll lay you a two-shilling piece—here it is—to a five-pound note. Are you on? Say you're on, Aunt Sara?"

"Of course, if it will please you. You won't like paying up your two shillings, I fancy."

"Oh, it'll be all right," Henry said easily. "You'll be careful not to let on to Floy, Aunt Sara?"

Presently he sauntered forth and encountered Florence Patmore returning

in the dusk of the afternoon from her walk.

"I wonder you aren't engaged yet," he said to her. "Why aren't you, Floy?"

"Waiting for you, my dear Precocity," his cousin said; "and please remember it's about time you started growing, for I won't have a short, squat, dumpy husband, whatever his other qualifications may be."

"Ah, I don't like them of your color; I like them fair with blue eyes; and you're too old for me," Henry gently explained. "Look here, Floy, I'll lay you two shillings to a five-pound note you're engaged by Christmas Day."

"And not to you! You think I shall seize on some one out of pique and insist on being engaged to him, whether he will or no?"

"Will you bet?"

"Oh, anything to please you!"

"I say! How would Coverley do who was here last night?"

"He wouldn't do if there wasn't another man on earth," Floy said.

"Ten pounds," said Henry to himself as he walked away.

When he went back to school he wanted to take a new bicycle with him. He was ashamed of his old machine since Todd at his house had brought a new one last quarter. He got on to it now, however, and bicycled up to the Rookery which was Mr. Coverley's shooting-box, and about a mile distant from the Hall where Henry was staying for the Christmas holidays. They had begun for him earlier than usual, an attack of bronchitis and his sister's wedding combined having brought him home a fortnight before the end of the term.

Last night, sitting for half an hour with his uncle and Mr. Coverley over their wine, he had heard talk of a retriever pup for which Coverley's keeper had been offered a hundred pounds.

"That's a tidy good sum for a dog," Henry had said; and Coverley had casually invited the boy to go up when he liked, to have a look at it.

He was inspecting the sleek black coats of the mother and her progeny

through the bars of the kennels when the master of the place strolled up, and pointed out the pick of the puppies, explaining his points, and the points of the father and mother, to the boy, who listened with flattering interest.

"I should like to bring Floy up to see them," he said.

So slight was the acquaintance of Tom Coverley of the Rookery with Florence Patmore of the Hall that the man did not even understand it was to that lady Henry alluded by her pet name.

"She's my cousin," Henry had to explain. "She's a good judge of a dog, you know. At least, I should think she is. She's most awfully gone on them."

"Bring her to see the pups, by all means, then," Coverley said; and asked if the lady lived in the neighborhood.

"At the Hall," Henry explained, chucking his head in that direction. "She's Floy Patmore, you know. You saw her at dinner last night."

"Of course," the other assented, without any show of interest. "I hope she'll come up, if she'd care to. I didn't know she had any taste for this sort of thing."

"She doesn't gas about it," Henry said. "She'd never poke herself in, anywhere. All the same, I happen to know she'd like to come and have a look at the puppy."

"Perhaps Mrs. Patmore'll bring her across one day, then," Coverley said indifferently. "If I happen to be out it wouldn't make any difference. She could see the kennels."

"Oh, but Floy wouldn't care for that at all," Henry said, and shook a wise head. "She'd like to have a talk with you about the puppy. She'd want to hear all you've been telling me. She's frightfully keen, Floy is. Let's see—to-morrow's Sunday. How would it do if we all came across here to-morrow morning, after church? I suppose you'll be at church to-morrow morning?"

"I wasn't thinking about it," Coverley acknowledged.

"But as Floy's rather keen on it, and

if you were there—in the porch, you know—and just asked us across—"

"Oh, of course."

"Floy'd be frightfully pleased. She'd like to see the stables so. She's nuts on that horse you ride, I can tell you."

"Black Michael? Really? I didn't think Miss Patmore admired horses or dogs—or, indeed, anything very much."

"Ah! That's because you don't know her, you see. Awfully reserved sort of person. Bottles everything up. She liked to hear you and uncle talking about your hunters last night. She was as pleased as Punch—although she did not look so."

"Really!" Tom Coverley said.

He recalled the dull family dinner he had been asked to join last night, and the rather disdainful face of the big, dark young woman, proud, silent, aloof, who had sat opposite him. No, he certainly had not been attracted by Miss Patmore. "She doesn't like my topics, and she doesn't think I'm worth while dragging out her own for," he had said to himself. Also, she was big and a brunette, and Coverley, who was short and dark, admired only petite women with blond hair. Nevertheless, he was good-humored; if the young woman really wished to see anything he had to show, why, let her come!

With some anxiety on the following morning Henry watched the Rookery pew. When at length the hoped-for tenant appeared, the boy wrote a message on the fly-leaf of his prayer-book and passed it to his cousin.

"Coverley is here. If he asks us to go across after church to see his pup, remember I want to see it."

"He won't ask," Florence wrote back, with the pencil thoughtfully enclosed for reply.

However, at the church door, to her surprise he was waiting—a short thick-set man, with a strong figure, a sleek head, a brown and healthy face.

"Miss Patmore, I think you like dogs. I wonder if you'd come across now and look at mine?" he said.

And Florence, taken by surprise, assented before she could remember an excuse.

So she, her father, and the boy—Mrs. Patmore was keeping her bed with a cold that day—walked along the wet meadow-path to the Rookery. There was only room on the path for two abreast; and as Henry chose to keep his uncle company it was beside Tom Coverley that Florence had to walk.

She said a few words about the weather, the wetness of the grass, her mother's cold, and for the rest seemed to listen to the conversation of her father and cousin behind. Arrived at the kennels, she threw a casual glance over the puppies, coaxed the smooth head of the mother, patted the close-curved head of the father, but otherwise showed no sign of the enthusiasm Coverley had it on good authority she felt. She was taken to inspect Black Michael in his stable, but omitted to mention how much she had admired him.

Her face relaxed a little from the rather hard look of disdain it had worn hitherto in Coverley's society. Her mother not being present, she was compelled to exert herself to some exhibition of graciousness.

Coverley did not specially admire either her appearance or her manner, and certainly she was not an easy girl to get on with, he thought. But she looked very well, standing with her gloved hand upon Black Michael's neck, listening to Henry's encomium on the horse, while the horse's master and her father made conversation near-by.

"Is your cousin always so silent?" he inquired later of Henry, whom he kept to luncheon with him.

"Silent?" Henry repeated. "Not she! Talks twenty to the dozen when she isn't shy. She's afraid of you, you know."

"Miss Patmore? Nonsense!"

"Isn't she, though!" Henry persisted, putting black Hamburg grapes into his mouth with regularity and despatch. "You should hear her going on when you aren't there; then you'd know! There won't be any holding her when she gets home because she's seen Black Michael and the pups. She was frightfully pleased you asked her to come."

"Really! I should never have guessed it," Coverley said.

"I suppose you don't know anything about kittens, Mr. Coverley?"

Mr. Coverley admitted he did not.

"Well, Floy's has got the distemper. It's a white beast she bought at a bazaar for two guineas. Swindled, of course. I'd wring its neck if it was mine, I told her; but girls are different. 'Twould please my cousin Floy frightfully if you'd look at it, Mr. Coverley."

"I don't like cats, my dear boy, and I could not do any good."

"I dare say. But Floy thinks you can. She thinks because you know such a frightful lot about horses and dogs you must know about cats. She'll cry her eyes out if the kitten dies; and she and I thought if you could walk back with me after lunch——"

"Of course, if I could do any good," Coverley agreed.

Henry burst into the morning-room where his cousin was sitting with her book, alone.

"He's come! He's here! He's asked for you! You must go at once!" he cried in breathless triumph.

Floy lowered her book and regarded the boy with quiet eyes. "Who is 'he,' pray?"

"Coverley. Mr. Tom Coverley, of course. He's frightfully gone on you, Floy."

"On me! That black-a-vised, horsy man. Absurd!"

"Then, what's he trying to see you for—twice in one day?"

"He may try!" said Florence, attempting to go on with her book.

"But he's come on purpose."

"Let him go home again."

"Floy," said Henry, and laid hands on her book and threw it away. "Tom Coverley can cure the distemper."

His cousin looked at the boy with calmly considering eyes. "I wonder if he could doctor the kitten, then?" she said.

"He is come to try. *Your* kitten. Floy. My word! Haven't you made a conquest!"

Florence rose from her chair; she towered above the boy, a fine, com-

manding figure. "You little vulgar wretch," she said, looking down on him. "Your sisters should have whipped you, and kept you in the nursery instead of letting you listen to their talk of conquests and the rest of the rubbish! Do you think I'm Ida? Do you think I'm Muriel? To get up an excitement over any miserable insignificant casual male that chooses to come to the place? Do you——"

"Go and get the kitten, Floy," the practical youth interrupted.

Florence, standing with the shivering little beast in her arms, forgot to be disdainful or indifferent as Mr. Coverley stroked the unhealthy-looking fur with a wary finger, and gave his diffident opinion of the way to treat the sufferer. True, she did not thank him for coming, which, as, at her request, he'd walked a mile through rain and slush to inspect her dirty little cat, he thought she might have done; nor did she evince an atom more of graciousness than politeness required; and having retired with the kitten to find for it the warm place Mr. Coverley advised, she made no haste to return.

"I say! It's lucky you haven't got a mustache!" Henry burst forth with a laugh when his cousin disappeared. "If you'd got a mustache Floy wouldn't have listened to a word you said about the kitten."

"Really?" Tom Coverley said, and smoothed with a remembering finger the place where the mustache had once been.

"You'd laugh if you heard the rot girls talk about men—I've got six sisters, you know, married off now. Girls do make such silly asses of themselves. This man isn't tall enough, that one's trousers don't hang properly, this one hasn't got a chin, and another's fingers are thick at the ends. Floy isn't half so bad. Floy's got no nonsense. 'Give me a man that looks clean, and hasn't got a lot of hair on his face; he'll do,' she says."

This moderation in the proud-looking young woman certainly pleased Tom Coverley, who held in unwarrantably modest estimation his own physical at-

tributes. Since she was not despising him all the time, as he had uncomfortably felt, placing that significance on her proudly carried head and her trick of seeming to look down on a man, her equal in height, through her lowered lashes, he found that he rather admired that attitude of hers; now that he knew what it was worth, he thought that he would be able to talk to her more at his ease.

So that after he had sat with her father for half an hour, tea coming in and Florence appearing to make it, he placed himself at her side, and in spite of discouragement persisted in talking to her. And he talked, not of dogs or horses or the motor being built for him against the spring, which Florence had believed to be his only topics, but of her life in the country, of the small local gaieties and the big town ones, of theaters, of concerts, of flowers, and of their mutual friends. And Florence, who must play hostess that day, forgot her pride and her prejudice, and allowed herself to be amused by the rich young man's naive remarks; to like his simplicity, his good nature, and above all, perhaps, the flattery conveyed by his persevering attentions.

"He wouldn't talk of anything but you all lunch-time," Henry informed his cousin later. "What you liked, what you said, what you did."

"A pleasing history you gave, no doubt!"

"Oh, don't you alarm yourself. I didn't give you away. Rather sickening, I call it, to have to jaw Floy, Floy, Floy with every mouthful!"

After that propitious Sunday, as must happen with country neighbors who are not recluses and have no cause to avoid each other, the Patmores and Tom Coverley ran across each other every day.

There was the occasion when Florence was persuaded to ride with her cousin, mounted on Florence's fat cob, to see the meet of the stag-hounds; and Florence looked perhaps her best on horseback. Henry may or may not have been aware of the fact, but to his thinking Coverley on his powerful hunter was a sight for gods and men; while

Coverley, if he could be sure of himself anywhere, was sure of himself on horseback.

"She don't hunt," Henry explained to him, "because she's got a lot of cranky notions of not liking to see the poor stag hurt—you know what sickening rot girls talk—but she was keen to see the start all the same. I'd told her all about your hunter."

No girl who was, like this one, a lady to her finger-tips, had taken such an interest in him before, Tom Coverley thought. Certainly no girl he had ever met looked more workmanlike than she on her horse; or sat it better; or had a finer figure. Tender-hearted himself, he liked of all things that women should be so, too, and he was conscious of a delightful thrill of pleasure as he reined his horse beside Miss Patmore's. Keeping his place while Henry's stubborn little mount backed into every vehicle and horse in the neighborhood, he reassured her as to the safety of her cousin, and the probably happy condition of the deer at the end of the run.

There was the occasion when Florence, driving the stubborn little cob in the Ralli car, was unable to get it to pass Tom Coverley in his huge yellow motor. The car was brought to a standstill; again and again the cob was driven to face it; only to stand on his hind legs, to swerve to the brink of the ditch on the left, or to attempt to overturn his mistress on the steep bank on the right. At last the groom was allowed to descend, and the animal was ignominiously dragged past the obnoxious obstacle.

"She's got pluck—your cousin!" Tom Coverley said to the assiduous Henry, commenting on this performance.

"Ah! A nerve, I can tell you!" Henry acquiesced. "She was down on her luck, though, that you should have seen Blazer behaving so badly. 'Any one else in the world I shouldn't have minded so much,' said she to me, as we went on. 'If Tom Coverley was to think I was a bad whip and to laugh at me I couldn't stick it, Henry,' she said!"

"Laugh at her!" said Tom, and there was a quaver in his voice.

It was at Henry's suggestion that Tom afterward brought the motor over to the Hall, and had the groom drive the cob backward and forward, past the machine, many times—Floy looking on the while—to accustom the animal to its encounter.

There was the occasion when the kitten, in spite of all precautions—or perhaps because of them—died, and Henry carried to the Rookery the intelligence that his cousin was inconsolable.

"If I'd got a spare half-crown I'd get her another," Henry said, pathetically sympathetic.

"Leave it to me. I'll get her one," Coverley promised.

There was the occasion—it was the one day in the winter that the big pond in the park bore—when Tom Coverley was fetched by Henry to teach his cousin Florence to skate.

She wanted no teaching, as was evidenced when Coverley, arriving, found her gliding over the ice with queenly unconcern and in solitary state—quite content to be solitary, but smiling a gracious welcome when the newcomer skated beside her. He came in to tea again that afternoon, and when he left was invited, at Henry's suggestion, to return for the family dinner.

He had not enjoyed the former occasion, but he accepted now with alacrity. He wanted to see more of this girl, with her strong interest in himself, her excellent taste in admiring short and broad and not at all handsome men, her sensible ideas so exactly coinciding with his own on every subject, her understandable enthusiasm kept modestly to herself. He had not admired her very much to begin with, but then he had not understood her, and had consequently been ill at ease. Thanks to Henry he knew her now, down to the ground.

As to Florence, her feelings, too, had changed considerably since she had first seen the dark red face, the broad and heavy shoulders of Tom Coverley opposite her at the dinner-table. She had despised a horsey man, one who could not talk on books and the questions of the day, but this man was so good-nat-

tured, so mindful of her wishes, and had, as he, simple soul, had confided to the boy Henry, such a touching admiration, rising almost to adoration, of herself. She made a more careful toilet than she would have done if they had been dining alone, and looked forward with a pleasurable excitement to the evening.

Now, Christmas Day was almost here, and it occurred to the anxious Henry that affairs were not progressing with necessary celerity toward the desired consummation. Casting about in his mind for means of hurrying the movement, he bethought himself that when the hopes of his sister Ida's desirable settlement seemed, at one time dimmed, she had turned her attention from him who was now her husband and had flirted with a detrimental, with the effect of bringing the eligible man quickly to her feet. No detrimental being at hand for Florence, Henry invented one.

"Hooper's coming down on Christmas Eve," he informed the gentleman he honored with so much of his society.

"Who's Hooper, then?"

Henry shook his head. "Don't know," he said. "Floy was staying in the same house with him in September, now her mother's got him down for Christmas. Floy and Aunt Sara are quacking about him all day long."

"Booky man? That sort of thing?" Coverley inquired.

Henry nodded a contemptuous affirmation. "All that rot," he said.

"Hm!" said Tom Coverley, and was silent for quite a long time.

"Is Mr. Coverley thinking of getting married, do you know?" Henry inquired on his return. He felt upon his face the anxious eyes of his Aunt Sara and the startled ones of Florence as he put his question.

"Married?" Aunt Sara echoed, but Florence was dumb.

"Something he said about his being abroad in the spring made me think he was; and he's got the portrait of an uncommonly pretty girl on his dressing-room table. I saw it when I went up to brush my hair," Henry explained.

"The wonder is, with all his money, his kind heart and gentle manners, he has not married before," Mrs. Patmore said, looked at Florence, sighed and returned to her book.

The outcome of this little diplomatic ruse on Henry's part being that Tom Coverley came to the family dinner-table in a depressed condition and was hardly able to bring himself to address the handsome young woman opposite in her most becoming dress; while Florence, chilled by the change in him to which she thought she possessed the key, sat in almost uninterrupted silence, wondering how she could ever have thought the man across the table, with his kind face, simply horsy; wondering that less than a fortnight ago his presence or absence was a matter of frank indifference; pondering on many things, withdrawn into herself.

Left alone with his host, Coverley received with embarrassment Mr. Patmore's careless suggestion that they should put him up for Christmas. Might he leave it open? he stammered. His plans were unsettled at present. When the two men went into the drawing-room Florence was not there. She was tired and gone to bed, the mother said.

Henry, who had gone to bed, too, was more than a little depressed. He had watched his mother deal with daughters less proud and reserved than Florence, daughters who for their part had had to do with men of a bolder temperament than Coverley's. He looked over a manufacturer's list received by that evening's post with a solemn face, and put it away with a sigh. Perhaps, after all, he would not be able to take a new bicycle to school.

On the morning of the day before Christmas the kitten destined to replace the victim of distemper arrived at the Rookery. Henry, sent for, pronounced it to be of a breed to beat the two-guinea swindle from the bazaar into fits.

"Well, take it, and give it to your cousin," Coverley said dispiritedly. "I got it for you to give her."

"Not till you're there to see how pleased she is," said Henry.

"I sha'n't be there at all," said Coverley.

"You aren't coming to-night to stay over Christmas!" Henry shouted; his hopes of the bicycle withered before his eyes; he was desperate. "You'll jolly well have to!" he cried. "They all expect you. Floy wants you. Such a set of fogies they've got there! Not a laugh among them."

"Hooper's there."

"Yes, and so's his wife and her screaming baby."

"Hooper's wife?"

"A pink-nosed woman always quacking about her infant."

"I'll come," Coverley said, as if the allurements of Mrs. Hooper and her offspring had been the one irresistible attraction.

Arriving before tea-time in the afternoon, he found Florence alone in the drawing-room.

For two whole days Coverley had not set eyes on Miss Patmore. Two days! His heart thumped as he walked across the room to shake hands with her. What a queenly young woman she was with her wealth of dark hair! Was there ever a time when he had thought he admired girls of insignificant stature and coloring!

She was paler than her wont as she greeted him. "I am so glad you found you could come, after all," she said.

"Of course I came!" said Tom Coverley, whispering the words, although there was no one there to hear.

Then Henry, kitten in arms, came in. His mind was at rest about the bicycle. It was Christmas time. He wanted to show Coverley a little fun. He stood at the back of his cousin's chair.

"Floy," he said, "you remember Snow-white?"

"The poor dead kitten? Of course."

"How deep did you have him buried?"

"Now, how should I know how deep?"

"Well, one of the dogs has been digging in his grave for days. I suppose he got down to the body at last, dragged it out, and brought it home."

"Henry! How horrible! Are you sure?"

"Yes. For here it is," said Henry, and dropped the new kitten upon his cousin's neck.

She felt its fur against her throat, felt it slide and slither down her back, and with a cry of disgust and horror she flew up, and—

Well, whether she flung herself instinctively into Tom Coverley's arms, or whether he dragged her for protection to his breast, neither of them, perhaps, ever knew.

Nor did Henry. He dashed from the room to explode with delighted laughter in the hall; he burst into the room where his aunt was sitting, talking to Maude Hooper about the baby on her knee.

"Fork out!" he cried, and held out his hand. "A fiver, Aunt Sara, please. And you'd better advance me Floy's fiver at the same time. She won't want to be reminded, just for the present, that she bet me a fortnight ago no power would make her marry the man she's engaged to to-day."

"You could have married Floy off years ago, Aunt Sara," he said later on in a quieter moment, "if you'd only known how to set about it. Once you know, these things, you see, are as easy as kissing."

DAWN

THE Dawn with delicate fingers
Touches the Earth and the Sea;
And lo! a new Creation—

The Soul of the Day set free.

TORRANCE BENJAMIN.



PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

The drama is of the people. The "intellectual" prevails at present. An estimate of Paul Hervieu. Olga Nethersole strained and artificial in "The Awakening." "The Honor of the Family," produced by Otis Skinner, tedious and uninteresting, in spite of Mr. Skinner's ability. The failure of "Society and the Bulldog" regrettable. The chief success of "The Jesters" is due to the charm of Maude Adams. The production of "Electra" by Mrs. Patrick Campbell heavy and unilluminating. "Irene Wycherley" shows technical ability, but that is about all. "The Worth of a Woman" has an absurd and somewhat offensive plot. Sothorn's revival of "Lord Dundreary" an undoubted success. "Twenty Days in the Shade" amusing and well played. "A Waltz Dream" filled with delightful melody



R. ARTHUR WING PINERO sat in the study-room of his flat at No. 14 Hanover Square W. C., smoking a cigarette gracefully and swinging his leg vigorously.

"Art," said Mr. Pinero as he smoked and swung, "is always of the people. The drama that counts is never produced by people who wear Jaeger underwear and live at Brixton."

To adequately translate Mr. Pinero into Americanese would take more than the space AINSLEE'S ordinarily gives to the drama of the month. What is clear, what is unmistakably true, and what pertains to us at the present moment, is the fact that "art is of the people."

It was only a short time ago that Mr. Pinero made this salient observation to the writer, and I did not think that so soon would it be apropos. The drama in New York has been, during the past month, of the variety that is known as the intellectual. Having been frivolous,

cynical, disdainful, spiritual and patriotic, we have chosen this month to be what it pleases us to call intellectual.

The weakness of any age or period may be well judged by its desire to appear intellectual. Whenever a people begins to talk about being cultured, whenever an artist is particularly glib about theories of art, or whenever an actor uses the word "histrionic," you may be pretty well assured that you are in the atmosphere of the faker. Great things are done simply. The great writers of all times were interested only in the thing that they did—the plays that they wrote, the pictures that they painted, the sculpture that they produced. With a few exceptions any great artist that you can think of was a great business man, and he wrote, painted or made statues because he wanted the money.

The drama of the month has been intellectual, and it has been produced by men for whom we have respect; and in the main we are in sympathy with their ambitions and hopes. But despite our

respect, and in several cases personal acquaintance, they are men who, to use Mr. Pinero's phrase, are wearing intellectual Jaeger underwear and dwelling esthetically in Brixton, a suburban quality for which I do not know the exact New York equivalent.

At the head of the heap this month was Mr. Paul Hervieu. Mr. James Huneker, a distinguished writer and an admirable friend, a man who might have been a great novelist—places Mr. Hervieu among the distinguished dramatists of our age. If I remember Mr. Huneker's book correctly, Hervieu is the only Frenchman that he picks out as an "Iconoclast."

As a matter of fact, Hervieu is just good French. To a great many people that is something that represents the ne plus ultra of art. To the writer it represents a species of esthetic degradation, and he isn't a disciple of Max Nordau at that.

France to-day is the home of the amateur. There is a lot of clever painting, writing and sculpture being produced, but the really great thing is woefully missing.

One thing alone the French are producing to-day in great quantity, and that is—conversation. When a man talks a lot about his wife you are quite ready to believe that he has one. When a nation talks a lot about its art, and succeeds in impressing the youth of all other nations with the fact that it is discussing an actual living thing, the conviction is apt to become rife that there is really a great art being produced.

There is no great drama being produced in France to-day. There are a lot of clever men writing plays—and Hervieu is one of the most respectable; the moral side of the theater having nothing to do with this form of characterization.

Two years ago Miss Olga Nethersole, the star in the present production, produced another play by Monsieur Hervieu, "The Labyrinth." It is a piece less filled with the faults of this author's style, but like this it was poorly translated and played like a Theodore Kremer melodrama. It is true that it is

no easy task to give the English reader an adequate idea of what the original of the play is like, for Hervieu is what the French call a *logicien dramatique*. Given a situation, his play develops it with relentless logic to an outcome that may or may not appeal to the sensibilities of his audience. Brunetière, Faguet and René Doumic have written interesting studies about their endeavors to write the old-time tragedy in the guise of modern play, and all of this, while extremely interesting from the critical point of view, does not make a popular play for this side of the water. The fact that it is a combination of the methods of Ibsen and Henri Becque prevents "The Awakening" from being a great play.

The story, briefly, is of a young European prince whose father is forced to abdicate, but succeeds in saving the throne for his son. The young prince, however, refuses to leave Paris, as he is in love with a married woman. His father has him kidnapped. When the lovers meet again the awakening has come—the woman has a sense of her duties as wife and mother, and the man a recognition of his filial and patriotic duties.

I wish it were possible to say something pleasant about Miss Olga Nethersole, who is a hard-working actress and selects plays that are interesting to discuss if not to see. Her entire performance, however, was constrained and artificial.

More fortunate in his production of English versions of French plays has been Mr. Otis Skinner, who came to the Hudson Theater this month with Paul Potter's translation of Emile Fabre's Balzacian play, "La Rabouilleuse." This is the third time that Mr. Skinner has selected a French play, and it will be a long time before we will forget the delights of "The Harvester," that wonderful dramatic song of the road. And almost equal in interest to Richépin's masterpiece was Henri Lavedan's "The Duel."

It was too much to expect that this good fortune of Mr. Skinner would keep up. "The Honor of the Family,"

as the play is called in English, will have no great popularity—it will appeal neither to those who love the vagabondish philosophy of the Richpin play nor to those who admired the incisive intelligence of "The Duel."

Ten years ago Jules Lemaître said of Emile Fabre that he was destined to be one of France's greatest dramatists, but neither "*La Rabouilleuse*," "*Maison d'Argile*" nor "*Timon d'Athènes*" has justified this prediction. A brilliant writer, like most of the "younger" French dramatists, Fabre's talent is dominated by all of those curious influences that have the strangle-hold on the French drama of the day.

"The Honor of the Family," in its English version, has been made as inoffensive as possible, with the result that all of the quality that goes to make the original story, "*Ménage de Garçon*," interesting is eliminated.

Flora, the young waif that the senile *Père Rouget* has taken into his house, is here very little of the devil that both Balzac and Fabre make her. She is but a conventional stage figure, a foil merely for the bravado of the swaggering *Colonel Phillipe Bridau*, who returns from the war to find his uncle and his money are in the clutches of the adventuress.

For two acts the play unwinds slowly, and it is only after *Phillipe* has killed the girl's lover that the audience begins to center its attention on the play. The duel between the colonel and the girl is clever writing, and had it started earlier in the evening might have changed the verdict.

The old man's infatuation for the waif is the one stumbling-block that the nephew encounters in his endeavors to save the "honor of the family." By pretending to make love to her in a "*Taming-of-the-Shrew*" fashion he succeeds in eventually exposing her and driving her out of the house, thereby saving the "honor" and incidentally the fortune for himself.

It is not, despite the endeavor to make it harmless, a pretty tale. Some slight success one might predict for it on the score of Mr. Skinner's very

capable and picturesque acting, but the memories of such better plays as "*The Harvester*" and "*The Duel*" will not help to draw great audiences.

It is, truly, the kind of rôle that is best suited to Mr. Skinner, the leading romantic actor of our stage. No more picturesque personality have we, and for that matter no better actor. But we doubt very much if even Mr. Skinner can galvanize a play that is so one-sided, and that, in its revelation of character, makes one wish that these things never were, assuming that they did exist.

It is almost with tears that I chronicle the failure of "*Society and the Bulldog*," the new play by Paul Armstrong, the run of which at Daly's Theater was short, swift and sure. There are only a few of them in the country—these playwrights who have virility and adult ideas—and one cannot help the feeling of personal loss when one of their works fails to meet with public approval. "*The Heir to the Hoorah*" and "*Salomy Jane*" have given Armstrong a leading place among the dramatists who shave, and he would have to write many plays much worse than "*Society and the Bulldog*" before he would lose our esteem.

The play was too loosely constructed and too rapidly written, though some of its pictures of what is amusingly called New York "society" showed the author at his best.

From this decisive failure we turn to the second play in the foreign department of the month's intellectual drama—"The Jesters" is a poetic play, by Miguel Zamacois. Unlike Hervieu, Zamacois is not one of the heavyweights of France, but a charming poet he is, and if there were a little more drama in his play and if it were about half as long it would be quite delightful. Such success as it has met with is due, however, more to the capricious charm and ability of Miss Maude Adams than to any avid desire on the part of the public to encourage the poetic drama.

The story is very simple, a butterfly sort of thing, and really should be placed two hundred years farther back to give

the satisfactory impression of the time of the troubadours that the play suggests. The Sire of Mautpré is ruined, and but ill conceals his bad fortunes. A young gentleman who is in love with his daughter is introduced into the castle as a jester, and there during a month's contest of wits, woos and wins the Lady Solange.

Bernhardt played the part of the jester in Paris, a rôle taken here by Miss Adams. Without talent of this order the play would not make much appeal to the theatergoing public though it is delightful reading, saving the occasional prolixity.

With Mrs. Patrick Campbell's production of Arthur Symons' translation of Hugo von Hofmanstahl's "*Electra*" the month's un-English drama rests. Mr. Symons is a distinguished poet, and there is much English in his translation that will repay reading, but for the drama itself one cannot say much. Under the right auspices it would be possible to sit through and appreciate this tragedy, whether the version be that of Æschylus, Sophocles or Euripides; but while Mrs. Pat is a splendid figure as *Electra*, neither the mise en scène nor the company conduced to making the performance noticeable. I was about to say that the company did not contribute to the gravity of the affair, but, as a matter of fact, that is all that they did contribute—and lots of it.

That the Greek tragedy can attract the public is proven by the wonderful interest with which Mounet Sully's performance of "*Œdipus Rex*" was followed when it was given in this city some years ago. But there is not in this German version of the murder of *Ægisthus* and *Clytemnestra* any central or prolonged idea to make it preferable to the bald originals; and after saying that Mrs. Campbell looked the part we pass quickly over into the realm of extreme dissatisfaction.

There are some things that Mrs. Pat can do very cleverly. Acting is occasionally one of them, but she is, like many others, a much better actress off the stage than she is on.

There are undoubtedly some fine

things to be said about the technical ability of Anthony P. Wharton, the heretofore unknown author of "*Irene Wycherley*," but when Mr. Pinero said that "art should be of the people" I am very much inclined to believe that it was of Mr. Wharton whom he was thinking; and if not specifically of him, at least of the men who are known in London as the Court Theater crowd.

The type is familiar here, and with all due respect to some very serious members of the coterie, the atmosphere in which they live is an atmosphere of fake. There are very many things about the theater that ought to be remedied, but the men who are going to make reforms are men of the people and not wild-eyed theorists.

"*Irene Wycherley*" is a product of the art-for-art's-sake theory; it is the result of the Little Ibsenite movement. It is what might be called an excellent sample of the drama for the few—the fewer the better.

Considering the fact that it is a first play, it is extraordinarily well done; but its technical ability hardly atones for its threadbare theme, its vulgarity and coarseness.

Miss Viola Allen appears as *Irene Wycherley*, a young woman who leaves her husband after enduring his infidelity and ill treatment for five years. She is very much in love with *Philip Harry Chesterton*, but refuses to get a divorce on the ground that her Catholic religion forbids it.

An accident to her husband causes her to return to him, but he further insults her by bringing into the house his former mistress, now married. *Irene* discovers who the woman is and orders her out of the house. The mistress is panic-stricken, knowing that her husband is jealous of *Wycherley*; and the end is that *Wycherley* is killed by the outraged husband, who then kills himself, thereby leaving *Irene* free to marry her faithful lover.

In the "*Irene Wycherley*" class, though not quite so offensive, is "*The Worth of a Woman*," a new play, by David Graham Phillips, given at the Madison Square Theater. When we

say that it was "given" we do not necessarily imply that it was accepted. Like Mr. Wharton's play this is a first effort, and all through it there were painful and tedious evidences that the author regarded it as a great intellectual effort.

The absurd plot turns on the refusal of a woman to marry a man whom she has once loved, well but not wisely. His offer of marriage is in the nature of a reparation, but it is rejected amid much high-sounding banalities; the worth of a woman, according to Phillips, being measured by her ability to turn up her nose at that well-established and somewhat popular institution known as matrimony.

In the end the lady takes to marriage and accepts the lover, who has once been driven from the house but insists on returning. The young man didn't know when he was lucky.

Miss Katherine Grey, one of the cleverest actresses on the American stage, made the heroine almost human.

Half-baked Ibsen—if the glorious old Norwegian dramatist had only known what endless trouble and rapidity he started, it is hard to think that, with his hatred of pretense and pose, he would not have burned his masterpieces.

In the face of this record it is easy to understand why the public has turned so cheerfully to Sothorn's revival of "Lord Dundreary." I am obliged to leave to my elders the inevitable comparison between him and his father.

The present actor is quite good enough, for he is genuinely amusing and shows himself to be a much better actor than his *Hamlet* would argue.

The piece of course is wonderfully out of date, but withal amusing, and in these times of "Irene Wycherley" and "The Worth of a Woman," something of a relief.

The popularity of another farce, "Twenty Days in the Shade," at the Savoy Theater, may also be explained on the ground that the public welcomes silliness in preference to vapid intellectuality. The piece is one of Paul Potter's adaptations from the French, and depicts the troubles of a married man who hires a friend to go to jail for him. He is forced to be congenial toward some professional jailbirds or have the fact disclosed that he has cheated the government. The company is an excellent one for farce purposes, and includes that rather remarkable person, Dallas Welford, as a chronic jailbird.

One comic opera loomed above the horizon during the month, the now famous "Waltz Dream" of Oscar Strauss. It is clever and filled with delightful melody, but it will be some years, I think, before there is another "Merry Widow" to upset our critical gravity. Had the opera been put on as it is produced in Berlin it would have been a sensation, but not for artistic reasons. Paris itself has seldom done more fervid things than the book of "A Waltz Dream" as it was originally written.



FOR BOOK LOVERS



Archibald Lowery Sessions

The current and forthcoming numbers of *Ainslee's*. Miss Ellen Glasgow's execution is not equal to her conception in "The Ancient Law." "Somehow Good," by William De Morgan, is somewhat of a strain upon the reader's credulity. Roy Norton's "The Vanishing Fleets" a startling and convincing tale. "Virginie," by Ernest Oldmeadow, is bright and entertaining. "The Magistrate's Own Case," by Baron Palle Rosenkrantz, an extremely good detective story. Louis Tracy's "The Red Year" must have been an easy story to write, but is sufficiently interesting. Commuters will especially enjoy "The Suburban Whirl," by Mary Stewart Cutting. "Janet of the Dunes," by Harriet T. Comstock, has merit in various ways



It is to be hoped that readers of this number of *AINSLEE'S* will find that the detective story — the complete novel — sufficiently meets whatever anticipations may have been raised by what was said of it in this department last month.

Two of the short stories in this number, in our opinion, merit attention. "Clothes and the Man," by Camillus Phillips, and "A Very Ordinary Affair," by Cosmo Hamilton, seem to us to possess a novelty of theme and a sincerity of treatment that ought to make them of much more than ordinary interest to constant readers of magazine fiction. Originality is a quality that is everywhere and at all times difficult to secure, and when it does appear it ought to be welcomed. We think it is one of the striking features of these two stories.

The May number of *AINSLEE'S* is going to be a particularly good one, the best indeed that 1908 has thus far produced, and our readers will concede that thus far this year they have had some excellent reading. The complete novel is called "The White Flier," and it may be guessed without much diffi-

culty that there is at least one automobile in it, a fact which furnishes a guarantee that it is a twentieth century story. Its author, Miss Edith Macvane, is no stranger to *AINSLEE'S* readers, who can judge for themselves whether her new story is likely to be worth while. We have a notion that they will be disposed to say that it is her best work, excelling even "The Adventures of Jou-jou." It is in a different vein from the latter, but loses nothing on that account.

Among other contributions will be a short story by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow, whose book, "The New Missioner," recently published, gave her a commanding position among American novelists. H. F. Prevost Battersby will also have a new short story, an announcement which, as we have reason to know, will be a most welcome one. Beatrix Demarest Lloyd, Mrs. John Van Vorst, Campbell MacCulloch, Owen Oliver and Francis Willing Wharton will also be among the contributors of the May number, and, what is much more important, their stories will be as good as short stories can be.



Miss Ellen Glasgow has not attained the heights which she vaguely had in

mind in her conception of "The Ancient Law," published by Doubleday, Page & Co.

The book shows the same indications of an unsuccessful attempt to capture an elusive ideal that were apparent in "The Wheel of Life." We shall not undertake, in the limited space allotted to us, to analyze the difficulties with which Miss Glasgow ineffectually contends, but it may be said in a general way that she appears to have a sense of a new ideal which has not yet been able to free itself from the traditions of the past.

Miss Glasgow's failure in "The Ancient Law" is due, in part at least, to the selection of a theme which of itself makes a new departure difficult if not impossible. The process of the social and moral regeneration of the ex-convict is one about which so much has been said and written and thought that the development of Miss Glasgow's hero, Daniel Ordway, has almost inevitably been submerged in conventionalities. The problems which confront the wrong-doer, even after he has paid the penalty imposed by society, are what they have always been; he finds that society is insatiable, that all the bitterness of its unending war against the individual is concentrated upon him because he is the least able to overcome it. He is denied human sympathy and human intercourse, and is forced to accept the alternative of utter degradation or of the spiritual exaltation that comes from self-renouncing service.

This is the substance of "The Ancient Law." Ordway works out his problem in Virginia after the formal expiation of his crime in New York and finds, as all of his predecessors have found, that all his reputable friends are against him.

As we have intimated, the novel is important because of its aim rather than because of its achievement, and in this respect its importance largely depends upon the possibilities it may suggest to its author and her contemporaries.



That Mr. William De Morgan thoroughly enjoyed himself in the writing of his new book, "Somehow Good,"

published by Henry Holt & Co., is a fact that the book itself demonstrates beyond question. The reader who bears this in mind will probably discover that the perusal of the five hundred and odd pages will be much simplified and that he will, in some degree at least, share the author's pleasure.

It seems a little ungracious, considering the author's unaffected joy in his task, to criticize the book in any of its phases, to do anything but accept it, as far as possible, in the spirit in which it is offered. To do this, however, we must forget, if we can, that the episode upon which the story is based is repellent, that Fenwick's loss of memory is, under the circumstances, improbable, and that the narrative, so far as its effective telling is concerned, is much too long.

What befell Rosalind soon after her arrival in India twenty years prior to the opening of the story is, as we have said, repellent, and perhaps Mr. De Morgan was wise in going no further than to make its nature clear, but the average reader will be inclined to wonder how it could have happened and will possibly indulge in some speculations not altogether in harmony with Mr. De Morgan's estimate of her.

That and Fenwick's sudden loss of memory and his gradual recovery in the home of his deserted wife impose somewhat of a strain upon the reader's credulity.

It must, however, be said that Mr. De Morgan has introduced us to some very attractive people, and his bright, good-natured gossip with them and about them is very charming. Sally is a delightful girl, and if she could make Fenwick forget the incident of her birth she surely ought to do the same for casual acquaintances.



"The Vanishing Fleets," by Roy Norton, published by D. Appleton & Co., is an adventure story of a type and substance that ought to establish the author's reputation and capacity as a novelist upon a foundation as solid as

that which he has built for himself as a writer of short fiction.

It is a startling tale and one which, as we are informed, has stirred the chancelleries of the world, as the newspapers are fond of saying. For some time past the air has been shuddering with talk of a possible war between Japan and the United States, and Mr. Norton has put into his book the fact of such a war and has shown not only that the martial spirit of the American people is still alive but also that the proverbial Yankee ingenuity is equal to emergencies. If the creation of Mr. Norton's imagination is ever put into practise, and he intimates that scientists with reputations to lose hold out hopes of it, some of us may live to see battles waged without loss of life; we may even see war and the ridiculous Hague conferences go together.

The aerial ships of the United States, equipped with their devices for abolishing the force of gravitation, put all the armies and navies of the world out of commission and revolutionize not only the art of war but the intercourse of nations.

The book does not deal solely with these matters, however, for there is a vast amount of personal interest—entirely apart from international complications—the most prominent of which is a very charming love story.

The book is written in a very convincing style, showing that Mr. Norton thoroughly knows his ground, and the characterization is extremely good.



The transportation from place to place of a very charming young woman encased in a cake of ice is not a particularly promising opening for a story in these days when realism is so much in demand. Nevertheless if the reader can make up his mind to accept the first two chapters of Ernest Oldmeadow's book, "Virginie," published by the McClure Company, he will probably feel repaid by his perusal of the balance of the story.

It is a very bright, entertaining tale, containing a number of reasonably ex-

citing adventures and ending in a scene of some dramatic intensity set with a good deal of ingenuity and described with considerable literary ability.

In this final scene the mystery of Virginie's abduction is satisfactorily cleared up, the purposes of the responsible agent, Canuto, are explained as well as his reasons for the selection of Lionel Barrison as the custodian of the young woman.

Most readers will doubtless feel that Canuto took some long chances and will believe that the outcome of his arrangements owes more to chance than anything else, in spite of his confidence in himself and his pride in his own foresight. He might very well have felt that he could safely depend upon young Barrison's chivalry—it is a quality not so uncommon after all—but how could he tell that the young people could fall in love with each other? Of course he was in the author's confidence, but authors play some strange tricks upon their characters occasionally.

It is a very entertaining, though not highly instructive, tale, and as such it is very much worth while.



"The Magistrate's Own Case" is a German detective story, written by Baron Palle Rosenkrantz, and published by the McClure Company.

It is an extremely good story of its kind, and nobody who is fond of detective fiction should be deterred from reading it simply because it is German. The murder of Baron Faringdon, the young Englishman, at Homburg, is sufficiently mysterious to make the solution of the crime intensely interesting, and the connection of Saarbrücken and his wife with the circumstances preceding and attending the murder is sufficiently intimate to justify the suspicions directed toward them.

It is all very plausibly developed, and the magistrate, Sterner, into whose hands the management of the case falls, thoroughly vindicates his reputation as a scientific penologist. There are several intensely dramatic situations in the

book, notably the scene between Sterner and Saarbrücken during the latter's eighteen-hour examination by the magistrate, undertaken to extort a confession from the suspected man, and the other during the trial of Saarbrücken when Rosenthal, his lawyer, shows that the circumstantial evidence in the case points to the magistrate as the criminal as much as it does to the defendant.

The outcome is rather unsatisfactory, for Saarbrücken is left under the suspicion at least of a guilty knowledge of the crime, but the question as to whether he was actually an accessory before the fact is not cleared up.

The characterization is extremely good, better indeed than that of most stories of the type, the best work being the characters of Sterner and Rosenthal.



If anybody wishes to inform himself—or herself—about the sepoy mutiny, which is always referred to in English novels as "The Mutiny," and which took place some fifty years ago in India, he—or she—would do well to read Louis Tracy's new book, "The Red Year," published by E. J. Clode.

Not that it pretends to be a history of that doleful event, it does not; on the contrary, it is called "beyond question Tracy's most important story," and it is offered to the public as fiction. If it is read as such it will be found to be a rather easy method of acquiring, or at least getting on the track of certain historical facts.

While its characters are mostly imaginary, and it has a rather slender thread of a story running through it—love of course—yet the bulk of the book deals frankly and openly with some of the main events of "The Mutiny" at Delhi and Lucknow, including the relief of the English men and women penned up in the Residency at the latter place.

The hero is Frank Malcom, a soldier of course, who because of his professional duties is involved in all sorts of thrilling adventures with hair-breadth escapes, and through all the weary months is kept by circumstances in ig-

norance of the fate of Winifred Mayne, the woman he loves. He finds her safe, though somewhat the worse for wear, however, at Lucknow when the siege of that place is raised by Sir Colin Campbell.

It must have been an easy story for Mr. Tracy to write, for he had the plot and most of the episodes ready-made, so to speak, and while it is interesting enough it is hardly complimentary to Mr. Tracy to call it his most important book.



"The Suburban Whirl," a new book, written by Mary Stewart Cutting and published by the McClure Company, contains fiction which has previously appeared serially.

Commuters will doubtless enjoy the book because of its verisimilitude to the facts of real life as they know it, and the dwellers of the city will be interested to find out that other human beings besides themselves encounter social complications.

Hollister Fastnet and his wife, Hazel, in the first story, were beset by the perplexities that always and in all environments surround people, especially young married people, who strive to emulate their neighbors and keep up appearances on limited incomes. Not everybody, however, is as wise as the Fastnets were, for they had sufficient discrimination to be able to see that domestic peace is more important than social success.

There are three other stories, entitled "The Measure," "On the Ridge" and "Mrs. Tremley," all of which, in our judgment, though shorter, are more important than the first, because each has a touch of human nature, lacking in the first, that gives point to it.



Janet of the Dunes, the heroine of Harriet T. Comstock's story, published under that name by Little, Brown & Co., is a young woman who is essentially self-made. To most of the rest of us she presents herself as a shining ex-

ample of what each one of us might be if we embraced our opportunities as thoroughly and whole-heartedly as she did. It is true that most people seldom have access to a carefully selected library in a deserted house on Long Island—or elsewhere—but other and perhaps more extraordinary advantages lie in our paths and we carelessly disregard them.

Janet, however, made the most of the books from the time she was six years old, and the result, at maturity, was gratifying, for though she was cultivated she was no blue-stocking.

Her childhood was spent on the Long Island coast, mostly in the society of Cap'n Davy, the lighthouse-keeper, and Cap'n Billy, of the life-saving station, but she had an inheritance of gentler blood than theirs, as the story discloses.

Mr. Davent, the owner of the deserted house, began to take an interest in her from the time he discovered her curled up in a big chair in his library reading Shakespeare, and his interest was passed on to his young artist friend, Mr. Thornly, in whom it developed into something more.

It is a story containing much more than reading and love-making, however, for the quaint characters of the locality supply humor, and the boisterous Atlantic supplies adventure for Janet and

her friends at the lighthouse and on the beach.

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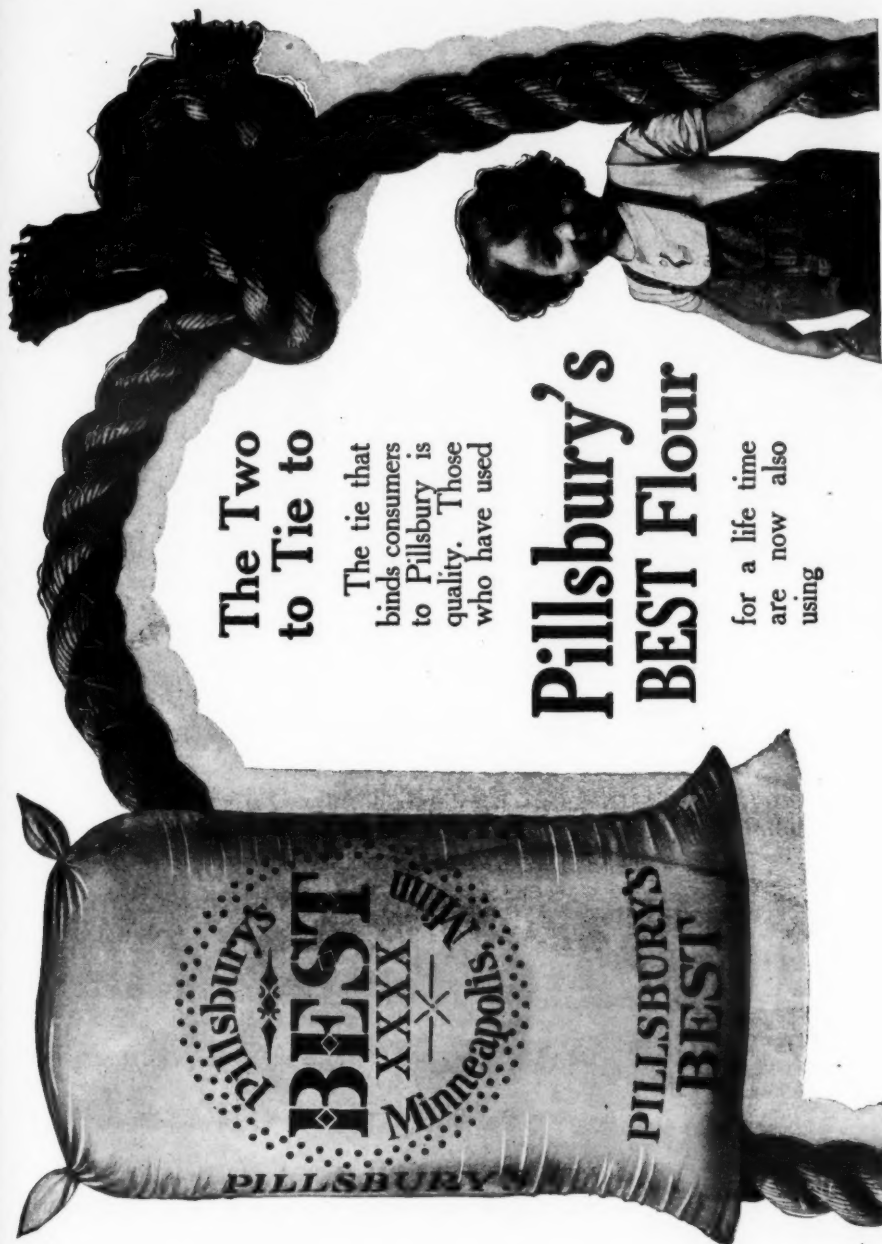
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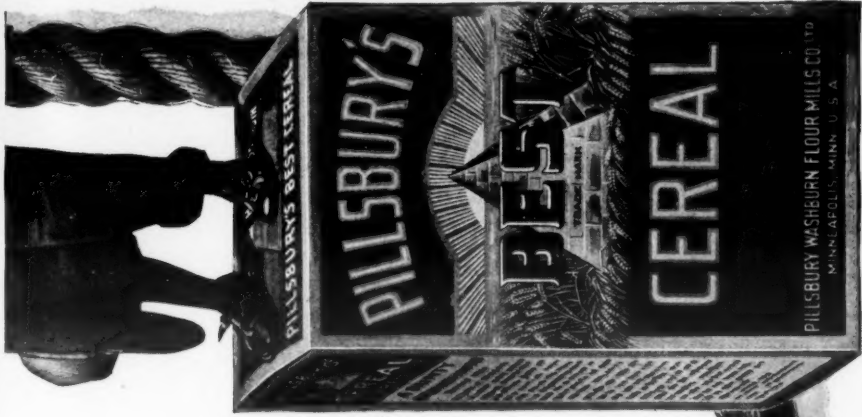
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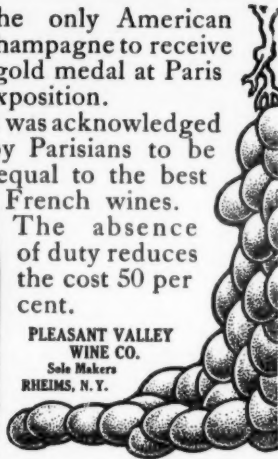
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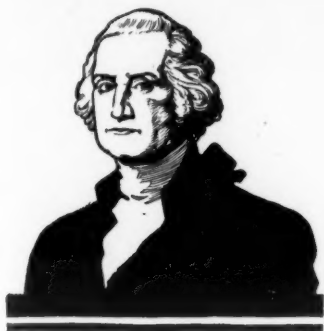


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Ford's Biography [1900], page 163. Quotation from Samuel Stearns *ibid.*
History of Virginia by Roger Beverley.
Colonial Liquor Laws [Thomas], page 60.

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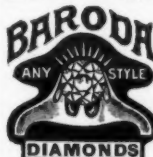
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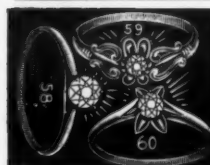


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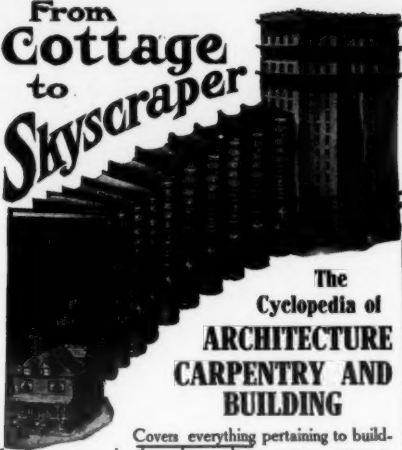
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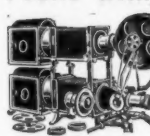
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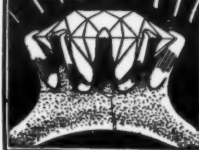


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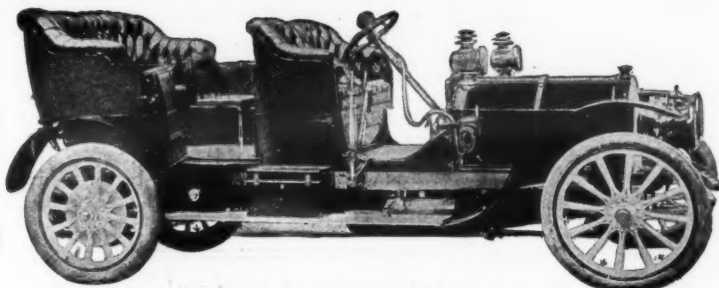
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Mrs. John Van Vorst, who made a deep impression with some recent articles in AINSLEE'S. Her story, which is very strong and dramatic, is called "The Other Chance," and gives a distinct character to the whole number.

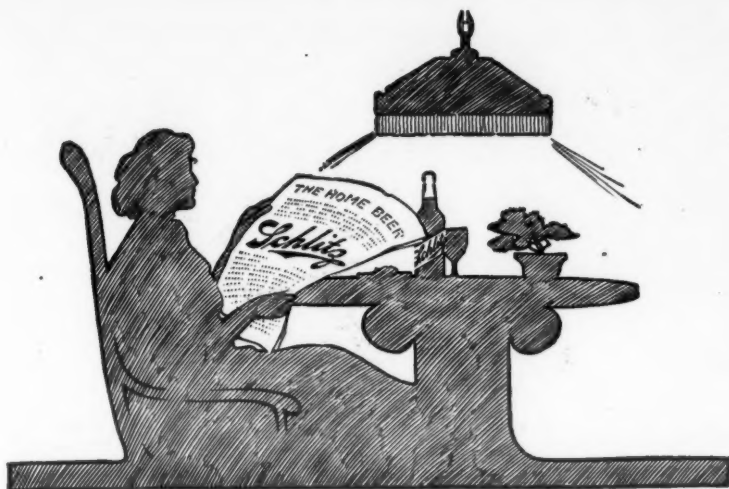
H. F. Prevost Battersby, a constant favorite with AINSLEE'S readers. "Three Ways of Love" is his latest contribution. Everybody who reads the magazine knows what to expect from Mr. Battersby, and in this story he has done his finest work.

Campbell MacCulloch, who is making a unique reputation for himself as a writer of strong and original fiction. "The Price She Paid" is the title of his story.

Some of the other short stories are "Sans Famille," a Western story, by *Roy Norton*, "Pigtail," by *Owen Oliver*, "The Romantic Mr. Wallenhoff," by *Beatrix Demarest Lloyd*, and "The White Hands of Miss Darrow," by *Francis Willing Wharton*.

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